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Zero Line

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ZERO LINE

A Screenplay

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Film & Television,
Loyola Marymount University of Los Angeles, California

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts

By

Timothy Kontje

This feature length screenplay written by

Timothy Kontje

under the guidance of a faculty committee
from the School of Film & Television at
Loyola Marymount University, and approved
by the members of the committee, has been
presented to and accepted by the Graduate
School in partial fulfillment of the thesis
requirements for the degree of Master of
Fine Arts in Screenwriting.

Advanced Screenplay Project Committee:

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Date

5/9/2019

ZERO LINE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - DAY

Perched on a flat strip of land surrounded by jagged ridges and peaks, the village is a small but picturesque cluster of low buildings.

MUSA, a young boy, races through the streets.

TITLE OVER: Erbil Province, Iraqi Kurdistan

Musa waves as he passes SHEPHERDS herding a flock of sheep down the street. He nearly trips and the Shepherds laugh, but he keeps going with a grin.

After weaving through a tight alleyway, Musa heads for an open-top JEEP parked on the village outskirts.

WILL BARNES (mid 30s) loads bags into the Jeep's trunk. He wears a flak jacket stamped "PRESS".

FARRAN, Will's driver, talks with a VILLAGE ELDER.

SARAH, his security, stows an AK-47 in the back of the Jeep.

Will turns at the sound of Musa approaching. The boy skitters to a stop and, panting for breath, exchanges a complicated fist-bump handshake with Will. In between breaths, Musa speaks in ARABIC.

MUSA
[Am I too late?]

WILL
[Right on time.]

Will reaches in his kit bag and pulls out a PACKAGE. Kneeling to Musa's level, he holds it out to the boy. Musa traces the mailing address and sounds it out.

MUSA
[San...Fr..an...kiss...go?]

Will chuckles.

WILL
Close enough.

Musa starts to take the package, but Will doesn't let go.

WILL (CONT'D)
[Hey. Remember what I told you?]

MUSA

[If I don't hear from you in a week, I send this.]

WILL

[No mistakes, okay? This is important.]

MUSA

[Trust me! Better than FedEx.]

Will surrenders the package and stands, tussling Musa's hair.

WILL

[Alright, alright. Get out of here.]

Musa turns and takes off running.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The Jeep winds through the spectacularly rugged scenery.

INT./EXT. JEEP ON MOUNTAIN ROAD - MOVING - DAY

Will checks a map on his laptop as Farran drives. Sarah scans the road from the back seat as they approach a turnoff.

WILL

This is it, turn here.

Farran nods.

INT./EXT. JEEP ON DIRT ROAD - DAY

The Jeep bounces as it leaves the highway for an unpaved road. Dust pours in the open sides.

SARAH

Shit, man, you couldn't have found something with a closed top?

FARRAN

Next time I'll get you an Escalade, eh?

Will cracks a grin, then closes the map on his laptop to reveal a background image:

Him with his arm around a WOMAN. They're both in climbing gear with a beautiful view of the Yosemite Valley behind them. She laughs as he kisses her cheek, an engagement ring on her hand.

Sarah sees the picture as Will shuts the laptop.

SARAH

You two set a date yet?

WILL

You're as bad as my mom -- I told you, we'll do that when I get back next week.

FARRAN

She still stuck on that Diwaniyah story?

WILL

Nah, her source finally came through so she finished up yesterday. Back home today.

SARAH

Or she just told you that so she could run out on you.

Will grins, used to the joshing.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Hey, how much did you drop on the ring?

WILL

None of your business.

Sarah pulls a face.

SARAH

That bad, huh?

FARRAN

At least tell me you kept the receipt.

Will chuckles when -- A DEAFENING EXPLOSION ERUPTS UNDERNEATH THE JEEP!

The force of the blast THROWS Will clear like a ragdoll. He HITS the ground hard. Through his hazy POV, he can make out the flipped Jeep, burning on the side of the road.

Farran's body lies next to it. Sarah stumbles away from the wreck, limping on an injured leg, her shouting muffled by the BUZZING in Will's ears.

SARAH
(muted)
IED! Get clear!

A burst of MACHINE-GUN FIRE tears into Sarah, dropping her to the ground.

Will's ragged BREATHING echoes in his ears as he drags himself away from the Jeep.

And then a pair of heavy black BOOTS appear in front of him, and the muzzle of an ASSAULT RIFLE.

Will squeezes his eyes shut.

BLACKNESS.

A single SHOT rings out.

FADE IN:

EXT. MARIN HEADLANDS - DAWN

Fog covers a trail with a spectacular view of the distant Golden Gate Bridge rising out of the early morning gloom.

Ignoring the view, a WOMAN runs along the empty trail. The same woman from the picture on Will's laptop, but ground down to something rawboned and sharp.

This is JENNA "JEN" LASKY (mid 30s). There's a steely drive about her that almost obscures the sliver of vulnerability behind her haunted eyes.

Sweat soaks her shirt, but Jen pushes herself with off-the-charts drive. Harder. Faster. Almost as if she's trying to outrun something.

She hits her limit and draws to a stop, breath coming in ragged gasps as she doubles over. Jen closes her eyes and takes a steadying breath -- and then forces herself to start running again.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

A small apartment dotted with mementos of travel: a woven basket from Botswana, Japanese woodblock prints, and an intricate menorah from Jerusalem.

The same picture from Will's laptop sits on a bookshelf.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - SHOWER - DAY

Jen stands in the shower, thoughts far away as she lets the water pour over her.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Jen adjusts her engagement ring. She looks at herself in the mirror, then closes her eyes. Takes a breath. Pulls herself together, as best she can.

EXT. LEGION OF HONOR - DAY

A light rain falls on the neoclassical courtyard, making the white stone colonnade seem even more austere as Jen crosses toward the museum entrance.

INT. LEGION OF HONOR - HALL OF ANTIQUITIES - DAY

Rows of chairs have been set up in the center of the hall, flanked by ancient Egyptian and Greek sculptures.

Jen sits in the first row, surrounded by other GUESTS dressed in black. There's a lectern at the front of the chairs, flanked by event signboards with a picture of Will.

They read: "In Remembrance of William Barnes, 1982-2019, Foreign Correspondent."

Museum director HENRI MARTIN (50s) steps to the lectern. He speaks with a slight French accent.

MARTIN

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

Jen looks tense in her seat, but forces herself to breath.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
If you look around you, you'll see
that we're surrounded by treasures
from some of humanity's most
ancient civilizations.

He gestures to the statues.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Today, antiquities like these are
under constant threat. Terrorist
groups like ISIS don't just destroy
historical sites in the name of
idolatry -- they sell stolen
artifacts on the black market to
fund their operations.

A few rows back in the crowd, CHANDRA PARKER (50s) watches
Jen through her horn-rim glasses.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Much of William's work was in
service of bringing the world's
attention to the issue of blood
antiquities. So, we're here to
honor the memory of a dedicated
reporter and my personal friend.

Martin gestures to Jen.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
We're very lucky to have his fiancé
and fellow reporter, Miss Jen
Lasky, here with us today. Jen?

Jen stands, forcing a tight smile. She and Martin do a quick
la bise and she steps to the lectern.

JEN
Thank you, Henri.

She looks out at the Guests.

JEN (CONT'D)
As many of you may know, Will loved
poetry, which I tried not to hold
against him.

The Guests chuckle.

JEN (CONT'D)

But today, I remember this, by
Stevenson: "Under the wide and
starry sky, dig the grave and let
me lie. Glad did I live and gladly
die, and I laid me down with a
will."

Her voice falters a little.

JEN (CONT'D)

"This be the verse you grave for
me: Here he lies where he longed to
be..."

She stops, tears welling in her eyes. Chandra's face clouds
with concern and murmurs ripple through the crowd. Jen takes
a breath, collecting herself.

JEN (CONT'D)

"Home is the sailor, home from the
sea, and the hunter home from the
hill." Thank you.

Jen returns to her seat and sinks into it, deflated.

INT. LEGION OF HONOR - HALL OF ANTIQUITIES - LATER

The ceremony over, the Guests stand together in small
clusters, talking quietly and sipping drinks as SERVERS roam
with trays.

Standing alone, Jen finishes her glass of wine and swaps it
for a full one off a passing Server's tray.

CHANDRA (O.S.)

Bad luck to drink alone.

Jen turns to see Chandra, holding a glass of her own.

JEN

Didn't think they let you out of
the office anymore.

CHANDRA

Salud.

They clink glasses and drink.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

How you been holding up?

Jen gives her a look: "how do you think?"

CHANDRA (CONT'D)
Figures.

JEN
When do you want me back?

CHANDRA
Look, Jen: take the time off.

JEN
Is that my editor or my friend
talking?

CHANDRA
Whichever one you'll listen to.
It's only been a month -- you need
more.

Jen glares at Chandra, about to protest further, but Martin
comes over to them.

MARTIN
Beautiful speech, Jen.
(to Chandra)
I don't believe we've met.

They shake hands.

CHANDRA
Chandra Parker.

JEN
Chandra's our editor at the Post.
(correcting herself)
My editor.

There's an awkward silence as she finishes her drink. Martin
and Chandra pretend not to notice.

CHANDRA
You have quite an impressive
collection here.

MARTIN
We do our best. It's always a
pleasure to know the history on
display here is appreciated.

CHANDRA
Will certainly did.

Jen walks off. Martin starts after her, but Chandra shakes
her head.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)
Best to let her go.

Martin reluctantly nods.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Standing in the kitchenette, Jen pours herself a whiskey and downs it. She refills the glass and takes the bottle with her as she moves to the couch.

Jen knocks back the second whiskey like it's water. This isn't for relaxation -- it's an anesthetic. She starts to pour another when the doorbell CHIMES.

EXT. JEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jen opens the door just in time to see a UPS TRUCK drive off down the street. Noticing something at her feet, she picks it up. It's Will's package.

INT. JEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Seated at the table, Jen opens the well-padded package and takes out a USB stick.

Opening up her laptop, Jen sticks in the USB. A VIDEO MESSAGE fills her screen. Jen swallows, emotional, as Will's image becomes clear.

IN THE VIDEO, he sits close to the camera in a dingy hotel.

WILL
Jen. I mailed this to you in case I
don't get back, so if you're seeing
it, I'm afraid the worst has
happened.

He pauses as the sounds of muffled VOICES and footsteps pass by in the hallway outside the room.

WILL (CONT'D)
I got a call last night from
someone claiming to have gotten his
hands on a full ledger of ISIS
records on antiquities smuggling.
Buyers, dates, where the artifacts
have gone: this could be everything
I've been hoping for.

Jen's eyes well as she watches.

WILL (CONT'D)
He mentioned al-Uman, a dig site
not far from Rawa. That's where I'm
headed.

Will smiles, almost sadly.

WILL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for all the secrecy, but
this ledger -- if it exists --
isn't something I want falling into
the wrong hands. I figured it was
best to tread lightly for now.

He kisses his fingers and presses them to the camera.

WILL (CONT'D)
With any luck you'll never see
this. I love you, Jen.

The video ends on a frozen image of him. Jen stares at it,
tears streaming silently down her cheeks.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO POST - NEWSROOM - DAY

REPORTERS and STAFF crowd the rows of desks, talking on
phones, typing on computers, hustling up and down the
staircases to the second floor with arms full of files.

Jen strides through the controlled chaos. She draws some
stares as she heads for the second floor editor's office.

INT. CHANDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Chandra sits at her desk, on the phone. She looks up at the
sound of someone TAPPING on the glass wall of the office to
see Jen standing in the doorway.

CHANDRA
(into phone)
Let me call you back.

She hangs up.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)
This better be good.

Jen tosses her Will's USB stick.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Chandra stares at the end of Will's video message, brow furrowed in thought. Jen looks at her expectantly from a chair across the desk.

CHANDRA

Don't tell me you want to go chasing this.

JEN

You understand how important it could be, right? Finding that ledger would be like a treasure map -- worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

CHANDRA

How so?

JEN

ISIS doesn't have a Caliphate to tax any more, so they need funding however they can get it -- but most of the artifacts they steal don't go to buyers right away. They end up sitting in free ports for a few years, places without much regulation where they won't be noticed.

She leans forward.

JEN (CONT'D)

If they're still out there, these records would lead right to them. This is the key to Will's story. I can finish it.

Chandra steeples her fingers as she thinks.

CHANDRA

Let's assume for a minute I actually believe that this ledger exists. It's too dangerous. Al-Uman especially -- ISIS activity has been increasing in the area.

Chandra shakes her head.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

And besides, you're too close to all of this.

(MORE)

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

I've known you since you were a stringer fresh out of college, and I've seen that look in your eyes before -- you want it to be true.

JEN

If you really think I can't stay objective then give it to somebody else. But this is my beat. The only person who worked it better than me is dead.

Chandra stands and looks down at the newsroom below. She takes her glasses off and rubs her eyes.

CHANDRA

Will wasn't the first reporter I've lost on my watch. I wish I could say that made it easier, but I don't think it's something you ever get used to happening.

She puts her glasses back on and turns to Jen.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

I don't want to see it happen to you.

JEN

It won't.

She stands up and steps closer.

JEN (CONT'D)

Please. This is what I do -- let me do it. For Will.

Chandra holds Jen's stare, weighing the choice...

EXT. DIG SITE - DAY

Biblical heat bakes the desolate land as a dozen local DIGGERS at work by a set of ancient stone walls.

They use picks and shovels with a lack of finesse that would make a trained archaeologist cringe. Holes from previous digs pockmark the area.

TITLE OVER: Anbar Province, Iraq

A MAN leans against a banged-up 1972 Ford Explorer, watching the Diggers. He wears a drop-leg holster on his thigh. A baseball cap and shemagh scarf hide his face.

He studies a map of Iraq. Several locations have been marked with red X's. There's a note with the map:

Check the following sites for the ledger.

-M

One of the Diggers (IBRAHIM) motions to the Man from an excavation pit, waving him over and exclaiming excitedly.

IBRAHIM
[Come, look!]

The Man pockets the note and map, then strides over. He gets down into the pit. The other Diggers cluster around as Ibrahim lifts up a cracked pottery vessel filled with several cuneiform tablets.

The Man pulls down his scarf as he leans in for a closer look, revealing his face.

He's an American: MATT BECKETT (late 30s). Burly and bearded, he carries himself with the deceptive ease that comes with years of field experience.

He looks disappointed as he examines the tablets.

BECKETT
[Nothing else?]

Ibrahim shakes his head.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
[Good work, Ibrahim. We'll just have to keep looking.]

Suddenly, a LOOKOUT comes running up shouting.

LOOKOUT
[Soldiers! The soldiers are coming!]

BECKETT
Shit.
(to the Diggers)
[Come on, let's move!]

The Diggers break into motion. Ibrahim helps Beckett carry the tablets and pottery to his truck as the rest scatter.

Beckett loads the pieces into a metal storage crate in the pickup's bed and snaps a lock shut on the lid. He pulls a tarp over the crate.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
[Go, go! Get out of here!]

Ibrahim splits. Beckett gets in, starts the engine, and throws it in gear.

INT./EXT. BECKETT'S TRUCK ON DESERT ROAD - DAY

Beckett ROARS down the road. He checks his rear-view mirror -- a pair of Iraqi Army HUMVEES come into view, gaining on him.

Up ahead, another pair of HUMVEES comes over a rise a quarter mile away. They come to a halt, angled to block the road.

Several SOLDIERS spill out, weapons raised as they SHOUT indistinctly for him to halt.

BECKETT
Goddammit...

He checks his rear-view again, gauging the distance. Another few seconds and he'll be boxed in. Making his decision, Beckett wrenches the wheel into a rough turn, leaving the road to cut out across the desert floor.

The move takes the Soldiers by surprise, and they scramble to get back into their Humvees.

INT./EXT. BECKETT'S PICKUP ON SABKHA FIELD - DAY

Beckett cracks a smile -- he's set to outpace them now. But then, his truck slows down. Confused, Beckett floors the pedal. The engine WHINES in protest, but the steady deceleration continues.

Beckett looks out his window and realizes: he's driven into a sabkha field -- a type of salt flat.

The pickup has broken through the crust of dried salt and become stuck in the soft mud underneath. Beckett switches the engine off and punches the dashboard in frustration.

Behind him, the Army Humvees pull to a stop at the edge of the sabkha patch. The Soldiers exit and advance.

CAPTAIN SARRAF (30s), sternly efficient, leads them.

SARRAF
[Get out with your hands up!]

Beckett puts his hand on his pistol...but then looks back at the Soldiers closing in. Hopelessly outnumbered.

Beckett sticks the gun in the glove compartment. Moving slowly, he opens his door and gets out with his hands raised.

BECKETT

[Easy, easy. I'm an archaeologist.
I have a permit.]

He reaches for his breast pocket as the Soldiers surround him. They tense, raising their weapons.

SARRAF

[Hands up!]

Beckett raises his hands again. Sarraf steps forward and pulls a folded document from Beckett's pocket. He looks it over, then crumples it and tosses it to the ground.

SARRAF (CONT'D)

My ten-year-old could make a better
forgery.

Motioning to one of the Soldiers, Sarraf points at the truck bed. The Soldier lifts the tarp covering the crate and SMASHES the lock off with his rifle butt. He opens it, revealing the pottery and tablets.

BECKETT

Hey! Hey, I'm telling you, I'm an
archaeologist.

SARRAF

We know who you are, Mr. Beckett.
You're coming with us.

BECKETT

The people I work for are not going
to be happy about this. I'll tell
you what: those pieces are worth a
lot. How about you just take half
and let me go --

Sarraf racks the slide on his pistol.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Or we do this your way.

SARRAF

[Take him.]

A Soldier slaps a pair of handcuffs on Beckett and pushes him back toward the Humvees.

EXT. BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - TARMAC - DAY

A 747 touches down with a ROAR.

INT. BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - ARRIVALS TERMINAL - DAY

Heavily-armed SECURITY GUARDS patrol with German Shepherds as a steady stream of TRAVELERS comes through the gate.

AMMAR (30), Jen's Iraqi interpreter/fixer, sits on a bench eating a shawarma. He wears a 49ers cap and has an air of easygoing calm.

Ammar straightens as he spots Jen emerging through the gate.

AMMAR
Jen! Over here.

She threads her way toward him through the crowd.

JEN
Hey, Ammar.

AMMAR
It's good to see you again.

JEN
You too.

AMMAR
Listen, about Will...I'm so sorry.

JEN
Yeah.

She nods -- clearly not going to say more -- then starts walking toward the terminal exit, forcing Ammar to catch up.

EXT. GREEN ZONE - DAY

Ornate EMBASSY BUILDINGS jockey for space with the sprawling, opulent REPUBLICAN PALACE.

INT./EXT. VAN IN GREEN ZONE - DAY

Ammar steers a VAN down a tree-lined boulevard. Jen looks out the window from the passenger seat and absentmindedly adjusts her ring.

Jen looks back around, suddenly aware of Ammar's concerned expression as he watches her.

JEN

So what's the story on al-Uman
these days?

AMMAR

Unstable. Officially, clear of
ISIS, but they keep making
counterattacks. Word is the Army is
going in to stabilize the area
noon.

JEN

How soon?

Ammar shrugs as he makes a turn.

AMMAR

Tomorrow, day after. I can get us
in with them.

JEN

Good, but we still need our own
security. We have to move fast, and
getting stuck on an embed's like
swimming with a ball and chain.

AMMAR

Understood.

JEN

Got anyone from the local pool in
mind?

AMMAR

Actually, I was meaning to tell
you: my contact at the prison just
told me about a guy they brought in
for smuggling the other day.

Jen shoots a skeptical look at Ammar.

JEN

You want to go with someone who
just got arrested?

AMMAR

He's an American -- former soldier.
Apparently he was carrying a map
and instructions to look for a
ledger.

Jen takes this in.

AMMAR (CONT'D)

Might be worth talking to at least,
see what he knows.

JEN

Alright, see what you can set up --
but be ready to call one of the
usual guys too.

AMMAR

Got it. You still want to see the
archaeologist now?

JEN

Yeah.

AMMAR

We can go to the hotel first if you
need to rest...

She shakes her head no.

The van passes under the VICTORY ARCH. A pair of massive
BRONZE FISTS erupt from the ground on either side of the
road, grasping SABERS that cross 40 meters in the air.

EXT. IRAQI NATIONAL MUSEUM - DAY

The crenellated square towers of the gateway arch in front of
the museum complex look like they themselves could have come
from ancient Mesopotamia.

INT. IRAQI NATIONAL MUSEUM - LAB - DAY

Rows of shelves rise to the ceiling, each stacked with
meticulously labeled containers. A large table fills the
center of the room, but only one of its work stations is
currently occupied.

Under a high-wattage light, a pair of hands in rubber gloves
cleans fragments of pottery. The hands belong to:

SAID AHMAD LATIF (40s), a quiet, thoughtful man. Impeccably
dressed, he works expertly, almost lovingly, labeling each
piece after he's done cleaning it.

A young ASSISTANT enters behind him.

ASSISTANT

[Forgive me, Professor. I don't mean to interrupt, but there is a woman here to see you. She said you had spoken on the phone?]

Said looks confused for a moment, then remembers and stands, pulling off his gloves.

INT. NATIONAL MUSEUM - HALLWAY - DAY

MUSEUM GUESTS take in massive *lamassus*, winged bull sculptures with human heads. Jen sits on a bench. She looks up and stands as Said rounds a corner at the end of the hall.

SAID

Miss Lasky, I presume? It's a pleasure to meet you in person.

He speaks English fluently, with only a slight accent.

JEN

Thank you for agreeing to see me.

SAID

Not at all. Shall we walk?

Jen falls in next to Said and they head down the hallway at a slow pace.

SAID (CONT'D)

What do you think of our collection?

JEN

Very impressive. Professor --

SAID

Please, call me Said. Americans like to be casual, yes?

They turn a corner into the next hall, lined with friezes.

JEN

Said. I think you can help me with finishing Will's story. I know you spoke to him already.

SAID

Just to give him some context on what kinds of artifacts are often stolen, yes. I was very saddened to hear of --

JEN

Don't.

Said looks alarmed at her brusqueness. Jen looks a little startled herself.

JEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I just...don't want to talk about that.

SAID

Please, no need to apologize.

They walk a few more paces in silence.

SAID (CONT'D)

You know, to be perfectly honest, I'm not sure how much I can do to help.

JEN

First place I'm headed is the archaeological site near Rawa.

SAID

Al-Uman?

JEN

Yeah -- and I could use someone with me who knows it.

Said's face darkens as he stops walking.

SAID

You mean you want me to go with you? Into the field?

JEN

Your dissertation was based on fieldwork there, wasn't it? You might help me turn up something I wouldn't even know to look for.

Said resumes walking.

SAID

That was a long time ago. I'm afraid these days I'm much too busy for such things.

JEN

There are thousands of artifacts still out there -- you can help bring them back.

(MORE)

JEN (CONT'D)

You can stop ISIS from making a profit on your country's history.

SAID

I've seen what they do to the people who stand up to them. Archaeologists like me get hanged from the ruins they try to protect.

Jen gets in front of Said, forcing him to stop.

JEN

If we're too afraid to act, then they've already won.

Said shakes his head.

SAID

I'm sorry, Miss Lasky. My wife and have a daughter -- I cannot help you.

Jen pulls a card from her pocket and holds it out.

JEN

I'm staying at the al-Rasheed tonight. Give me a call if you change your mind.

Said takes the card, then steps past Jen and moves off down the hallway as she watches him go.

EXT. GREEN ZONE - THESEUS GROUP HEADQUARTERS - DAY

An imposing building that resembles an obsidian wedge stabbing skyward.

INT. THESEUS GROUP HEADQUARTERS - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

A MAN (KHALID) with matted hair and an unkempt beard half-stands in the center of the bare, soundproofed room. His hands are held aloft, manacled to a chain over his head.

A pair of GUARDS in ski masks stand motionless behind him. Khalid looks up as the room's heavy door swings open.

MILLER (early 40s), a powerfully-built contractor, a soldier to the core, steps in eating a bag of chips. He stops a few feet from Khalid and smiles through a mouthful.

MILLER

You're one sorry-ass looking
terrorist, Khalid.

Khalid blinks at him, eyes unfocused from sleep deprivation.

KHALID

Please...I did not want to go to
ISIS. My family just needed to eat.

MILLER

You know how many of you guys I
talk to who say they joined before
they knew what the Caliphate really
was, or that they did it just to
make money? It's bullshit -- you
joined because you believed in it.

KHALID

I only worked as a digger.

MILLER

Now see, that's what we need to
talk about. I sent a guy to check
out those sites you told us about,
and all he found was a bunch of
Iraqi Army waiting to arrest him.

Khalid shakes his head desperately.

KHALID

Miller, please --

Miller motions to one of the Guards. He grabs Khalid in a
chokehold. Khalid struggles, gasping for air.

MILLER

Where are those files? Where is the
ledger?

Miller nods at the Guard to release Khalid. He gasps for
breath, on the verge of passing out.

MILLER (CONT'D)

That's the last time I ask nicely.

KHALID

I have already told
you...everything I know. I just
heard some other guys I worked with
talking. They said someone stole a
bunch of files.

Miller finishes his chips and crumples up the bag. He tosses it to one of the Guards and leans in close to Khalid.

MILLER

Just give me something actionable
and this will all stop.

IBRAHIM

I swear to God, I don't know.

Khalid holds Miller's stare. Miller pats his cheek.

MILLER

I believe you, buddy.

Miller heads for the door.

KHALID

Wait -- where are you going? What --

One Guard puts Khalid in the chokehold again, throttling him while the other holds him down. Khalid thrashes wildly. Miller doesn't look back as the door SLAMS shut behind him.

INT. BAGHDAD PRISON - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

A bored RECEPTIONIST looks up from the computer behind his window as Jen and Ammar come in.

RECEPTIONIST

[Yes?]

AMMAR

[We're here to see the warden.]

Jen holds up her press pass. The Receptionist eyes it skeptically, then picks up his desk phone.

RECEPTIONIST

[Someone here for you.]

The Receptionist hangs up and goes back to his computer, ignoring Jen. He straightens as YUSUF (50s) emerges from a hallway into the reception area, bulging gut straining against his uniform.

YUSUF

Ah, Miss Lasky. It's been too long.
(to the Receptionist)
[Take your break.]

Looking put-upon, the Receptionist rises and heads off. Yusuf turns back to Jen.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
How can we help you?

JEN
We'd like to see one of your
prisoners.

Yusuf shakes his head, tscking theatrically.

YUSUF
I'm afraid we no longer allow that.

JEN
Of course you don't.

She digs a wad of cash from her pocket and slips it to Yusuf.

YUSUF
Ah, I just remembered that we have
a new policy about visiting hours.
It seems you are allowed after all.

He breaks into a broad smile.

INT. PRISON - DETENTION CELL - DAY

Flanked by two GUARDS, Yusuf enters the room. Close to FIFTY PRISONERS sit packed together, soaked with sweat.

Yusuf holds a handkerchief over his mouth and nose to block out the stench as he barks an order to one of the Guards.

The Guard walks among the Prisoners, kicking ones who don't move aside fast enough as he scans for someone in particular.

At the back of the room, Beckett sits slumped against the wall. The Guard makes eye contact: Beckett's the one he's looking for.

INT. PRISON - HALLWAY - DAY

Jen and Ammar follow Yusuf down a dimly-lit hallway toward the door to an interrogation room.

YUSUF
I should warn you, he has not been
very cooperative.

The look in Jen's eye says that she's not taking no for an answer. Yusuf shrugs -- your funeral -- and opens the door for them.

INT. PRISON - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Beckett sits with his hands cuffed to the table, taking in the ONE-WAY MIRROR that takes up most of one wall. A GUARD stands behind him. Yusuf sits at the table across from him, looking over an open file.

YUSUF

Matthew Beckett. You have quite the colorful resume: Major in the United States Army. Tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Two years in Delta Force before a dishonorable discharge for assaulting a superior officer.

BECKETT

I'll just stop you when you get one wrong.

Yusuf closes the file.

YUSUF

I must say, I'm somewhat disappointed. Smuggling hardly seems worthy of a man with your talents.

BECKETT

Have to pay the bills somehow.

YUSUF

Indeed. And ISIS pays quite well.

BECKETT

I told you. I don't work for them.

YUSUF

Then who do you work for?

Beckett just raises a middle finger. Yusuf stands.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

I'm glad you're happy in this facility, Mr. Beckett. You may be here for some time.

He heads for the door. It SLAMS shut behind him. Becket eyes the one-way mirror...

INT. BAGHDAD PRISON - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

...that Jen and Ammar are standing behind. She's holding Beckett's map and note. Ammar gives her a look -- are you kidding me?

Yusuf steps in.

YUSUF

So, what do you think?

Jen looks at Beckett through the mirror, thoughtful, then down at the map, and turns to face Yusuf.

JEN

You said he had this on him when he got picked up, right?

YUSUF

Yes...

JEN

Then I want to get him out of here.

Yusuf scoffs.

YUSUF

This man is a criminal, possibly a terrorist.

JEN

He's a thief, not a not a terrorist.

YUSUF

And you would know this how?

JEN

People usually don't sign up for a jihad just to get a paycheck. He really strike you as a true believer?

YUSUF

Perhaps you're right, but he cannot just walk out because of what you say.

JEN

I'll have my paper pay his bail. And make a donation to a dedicated public servant's retirement fund, of course.

Yusuf looks from her to Beckett, weighing the choice...

EXT. PRISON - PARKING LOT - DAY

Beckett steps out pulling on his jacket and heads down the barbed wire-lined corridor to the parking lot. He pauses as he sees Jen and Ammar watching him by their van, then approaches warily.

JEN

Looks like you could use a drink.

BECKETT

And I take it you'll be paying for that as well?

AMMAR

Comes with a job offer.

BECKETT

Not interested.

JEN

You can always go back in there and try your luck with the warden.

Beckett looks back at the prison as if he's seriously considering it.

INT. GREEN ZONE - BAR - NIGHT

The kind of grimy, dimly-lit place where off-duty BUSINESSMEN, JOURNALISTS, and AID WORKERS all rub elbows. It's happy hour, and tinny Iraqi POP MUSIC blares over the noise of the crowd.

Jen and Beckett share a booth in a relatively quiet corner, working on a pair of beers.

BECKETT

So let me get this straight: you want to go to one of the most dangerous places on earth just to find a notebook?

JEN

You know, I don't think you're half as obtuse as you make out to be.

(MORE)

JEN (CONT'D)

Finding that notebook could lead to one of the most valuable stolen treasures in history, and you know it. Or else you wouldn't already have been looking for it.

BECKETT

How do you know I was?

Jen arches a skeptical eyebrow and slides the map and note across the table.

JEN

Who's "M"?

BECKETT

Mary Poppins.

JEN

Look, I didn't get you out of that cell just for your sense of humor.

BECKETT

Then why did you? You could find a dozen hired guns between this table and the bar.

JEN

And if I was looking for just another jarhead, I wouldn't be talking to you. Al-Uman is the next name on your list -- we're after the same thing.

BECKETT

And the last time I went looking for it, all I got was arrested. The people who hired me know that by now, which means I'm expendable -- I'm getting the hell outta Dodge while the getting's good. You should too.

JEN

I can handle myself.

Beckett chuckles, shaking his head.

BECKETT

You seen much action on this beat?

JEN

I was embedded with the Counter
Terrorism Service troops in Mosul
for most of a year.

BECKETT

Must know your shit then -- I can
respect that. But this is a whole
different ballgame.

Jen leans forward.

JEN

Exactly. This would be a hell of a
story, and I can guarantee my paper
would compensate anyone who helps
me get it. Not to mention how
grateful the National Museum might
be to get their antiquities back.

Beckett takes a drink, thinking it over, and shakes his head.

BECKETT

I can make my own way.

He fishes a few crumpled bills from his pocket and tosses
them on the table.

EXT. BAR - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Beckett steps out of the back door and heads down the alley.
Jen emerges after him.

JEN

Hey, I just bailed your ass out of
there --

BECKETT

And I'm grateful -- but let it go.

She catches up to Beckett as he reaches the end of the alley.
Jen starts to say more but stops as a shadow detaches itself
from a doorway and looms in front of them.

Jen and Beckett come to a halt in front of the towering MAN --
it's a plainclothes security contractor (HARRIS). Glancing
behind him, Jen sees another CONTRACTOR (GREEN) appear.

HARRIS

You wouldn't be trying to run out
on us, would you?

BECKETT

Everybody gets picked up sooner or later -- this wasn't my fault.

Green advances, moving to close them in.

JEN

Guys. We can talk about this.

BECKETT

They didn't come here to talk.

Harris eyes Jen.

HARRIS

Who's she?

BECKETT

Not your concern.

CONTRACTOR

She is now.

The Contractors are almost within striking distance.

BECKETT

You should really just walk away.

JEN

I told you I can take care of myself.

BECKETT

Wasn't talking to you.

Harris chuckles and takes another step forward. He draws his arm back and throws a punch that could dent metal --

But Beckett has already twisted out of the way and inside his guard. He RAMS his elbow into Harris's stomach, then SMASHES a boot into his knee and sends him dropping to the ground, ROARING in pain.

Green draws a PISTOL --

JEN

Gun!

Without skipping a beat, Beckett whirls and snatches the gun away. He SLAMS it into Green's face, shattering his nose and knocking him to the pavement.

BECKETT

Get out of here while I'm still in
a good mood.

Harris and Green pick themselves up and take off down the
alley as fast as they can.

Beckett watches until they round the corner. He ejects the
round from the gun's chamber, removes the magazine, and
disassembles the slide, then tosses the pieces aside.

Jen follows him as he starts down the alley again.

JEN

You want to walk out of here, go
ahead. I can't do a damn thing to
stop you. But I'm willing to bet
your friends back there won't be
the last ones who come to collect.
How long do you think you'll last,
looking over your shoulder for
who's next?

Beckett pauses. He turns to face Jen as she steps closer.

BECKETT

What exactly are you offering?

JEN

Help me track down the artifacts
and go on the record about who
hired you.

BECKETT

They won't exactly thank me for
selling them out.

JEN

Something tells me that with that
kind of money, a man like you could
disappear if he wants to. I'll make
sure you have enough to get out of
this life for good.

Beckett considers this.

BECKETT

Until the money's in my account, I
don't say a word.

JEN

Fair enough.

BECKETT

And how do I know you'll deliver?

JEN

Same way I know you will -- just
have to trust each other.

She holds out her hand. After a long moment Beckett clasps
his hand around hers.

INT. SAID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's a small but tidy space. Said sits at the kitchen table
sipping a mug of tea as he reads a book.

His daughter NASIM (6) draws at the table across from him.
She proudly holds up her drawing of a flower.

NASIM

[Look, Papa!]

SAID

[That's beautiful, my love.]

The front door opens behind him and ALIA (early 40s), warm
and outgoing, comes in. She's dressed in nurse's scrubs.

NASIM

[Mama!]

Nasim runs and hugs her mother as she sets her bag down.

ALIA

[Hello there!]

Alia picks her up and heads to the table, pausing to kiss
Said on the cheek.

SAID

[How was work?]

He closes his book and heads to the kitchenette, setting
water to boil as Alia starts drawing with Nasim.

ALIA

[Okay, but the hospital needs a new
generator.]

SAID

[You know I don't like you working
in that part of town. It's not
safe.]

ALIA

[It's fine -- not everyone is as paranoid as you, you know. Besides, the people there need the most help.]

SAID

[Being cautious is sensible, not paranoid.]

Alia chuckles as he adds rice to the water.

EXT. SAID'S APARTMENT - BALCONY - NIGHT

Later that night. Said and Alia sit together, looking out at the lights of the city shining in the distance.

SAID

[You really think I should help her? The journalist?]

ALIA

[Her work sounds important.]

SAID

[Not as important as my family. My place is here.]

Alia smiles a little.

ALIA

[What is it you tell Nasim all the time?]

Said looks away, somewhat embarrassed.

SAID

[We always do what's right, even when it's hard.]

Alia touches his face, turning him back toward her.

ALIA

[Believe me, the last thing I would ever want is for you to be in danger.]

SAID

[Me too.]

They share a smile.

ALIA
[You must do what your heart tells
you -- but whatever you chose, I am
with you.]

She kisses him gently.

INT. SAID'S APARTMENT - NASIM'S ROOM - NIGHT

The door opens and Said peeks in to see Nasim sleeping peacefully. He looks at her, deep in thought...

INT. AL-RASHEED HOTEL - GYM - NIGHT

This late at night, Jen has the place to herself as she runs on a treadmill. Her phone BUZZES from her back pocket. She pauses running and answers the call, listening for a moment.

JEN
You made the right choice.

After listening for another beat, Jen hangs up. She restarts the treadmill, picking up speed.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - THE PENTAGON - DAY

Nearly ten thousand miles away, the sun still shines off the behemoth of a building.

INT. PENTAGON - HEARING ROOM - DAY

GENERAL BANKS (60s) and four other COMMITTEE MEMBERS sit at a row of raised desks.

CATHERINE DYER (50s), elegant and unflinching, faces them alone at a table with a microphone.

GENERAL BANKS
Miss Dyer, we appreciate the
services your company has provided
over the years.

DYER
Thank you, General.

GENERAL BANKS
However, this committee feels that
as we move toward finishing the
fight against ISIS, we must explore
new strategies.
(MORE)

GENERAL BANKS (CONT'D)

Therefore, we've decided not to
extend Theseus Group's contract.

Dyer bristles, but she keeps her voice cool and level.

DYER

Mr. Chairman, my contractors have
played a vital part in this
conflict. I --

GENERAL BANKS

We're all well aware of that, Miss
Dyer, but what of the numerous
allegations of misconduct?

Banks refers to the open binder in front of him.

GENERAL BANKS (CONT'D)

Torture of civilians? Unsanctioned
assassinations?

DYER

Those allegations are completely
unsubstantiated.

GENERAL BANKS

Let me be frank: unsubstantiated or
not, the United States cannot
afford to be associated with a
reputation such as yours.

DYER

Then General, let me be equally
frank: You know as well as I do
that territory means nothing to
ISIS. They'll find new ways to fund
their attacks, and it won't be you
that stops them. It will be me, and
companies like mine. The American
people have no desire to send more
troops into another quagmire.

GENERAL BANKS

Deciding what the American people
want isn't your job, Miss Dyer,
it's ours.

Dyer tries to mask her anger -- not entirely successfully --
as General Banks forcefully closes his binder.

EXT. BAGHDAD SUBURBS - DAY

FOUR THESEUS GROUP HUMVEES rumble along the road.

INT. MILLER'S HUMVEE - MOVING - DAY

Miller rides shotgun. Three more CONTRACTORS are with him: Harris drives. Green and KELLY sit in the back.

A phone RINGS from the back seat. Kelly takes it on her wireless headset, and after a moment passes the earpiece forward to Miller.

KELLY

For you.

Miller slips on the earpiece.

MILLER

It's late there, you should be getting your beauty sleep.

DYER (ON PHONE)

Progress report.

Her sharp tone takes Miller by surprise.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - THESEUS GROUP OFFICES - NIGHT

Using an earpiece of her own, Dyer strides out of the sleek glass and steel structure toward a waiting black BENTLEY.

MILLER (ON PHONE)

Khalid was a dead end.

DYER

That's unacceptable, soldier.

MILLER (ON PHONE)

Just give me some more time to --

DYER

We don't have any more time. Banks is ending the contract.

Miller's voice tightens.

MILLER (ON PHONE)

All of it?

DYER

Full demob, zero footprint.

The CHAUFFEUR opens the back door and Dyer steps in.

INT. DYER'S BENTLEY - MOVING - NIGHT

Dyer nods at the Chauffeur to start driving, then brings up the privacy screen.

DYER

We're hemorrhaging money, and the Pentagon is breathing down my neck looking for an excuse to shut us down for good. We need that ledger.

MILLER (ON PHONE)

I understand.

DYER

You better. And where are we with Beckett?

MILLER (O.S.)

Someone got to him before us. We're working on it.

DYER

Make it happen.

MILLER (O.S.)

We'll get it done, ma'am.

Dyer ends the call and tosses her earpiece aside.

EXT. AL ASAD AIRBASE - DAY

Massive runways crisscross the desert floor next to a vast array of facilities for thousands of troops.

EXT. AL ASAD AIRBASE - STAGING AREA - DAY

The whole place buzzes with activity. ARMORED VEHICLES RUMBLE. A loudspeaker BLARES orders in Arabic and English. IRAQI TROOPERS, US DELTA OPERATORS, and MARINES run pre-combat checks and load gear into Armored Personnel Carriers.

Jen, Said, and Ammar stride through it all with Beckett. He's newly kitted out with a tac vest and assault rifle.

Said turns at the sight of a BLACK HAWK taking off from deeper inside the base. Not looking where he's going, he keeps walking into the path of an oncoming HUMVEE.

It slams on its brakes, HONKING. Jen pulls Said back. The MARINE driving gives Said the finger as he drives off.

MARINE
Watch it, asshole!

The Humvee kicks up a cloud of dust, making Said cough. Jen just pulls her scarf up over her mouth and keeps going. Embarrassed, Said follows her toward a large tent.

INT. AL ASAD AIRBASE - BRIEFING TENT - DAY

Captain Sarraf addresses his squad of ten COUNTER TERRORISM SERVICE TROOPERS and a group of IRAQI ARMY from the front of the tent, flanked by satellite maps of a bridge.

SARRAF
[...main forces will be making sure
the city is clear. Our objective
will be to secure this bridge a few
kilometers to the south.]

He points it out on a map as Jen and her group step into the back of the tent.

SARRAF (CONT'D)
[Local militia have driven ISIS
forces from the area, but stay
alert.]

Said takes this in, unsettled.

SARRAF (CONT'D)
[Dismissed -- and God be with you.]

The Troopers stand and begin exiting the tent as Jen heads up to Sarraf with her crew in tow.

JEN
Captain Sarraf, you got a few empty
seats?

Sarraf shoots a dark glance toward Beckett.

SARRAF
What is he doing here?

JEN
He's with me.

SARRAF
A man like that cannot be trusted.

Beckett glares at Sarraf. Jen raises a placating hand.

JEN
He won't get in your way, I
promise.

SARRAF
If he does, you're gone.

JEN
Fair enough.

Sarraaf turns back to the map.

SARRAF
Where exactly are these ruins of
yours, Miss Lasky?

Jen motions to Said, and he points to the map.

SAID
Here -- just across the bridge.

SARRAF
Very well. But I must warn you: the
area may still be dangerous.

JEN
If we're going to find anything, we
have to get in there now before
somebody else does.

Sarraaf nods, then puts on his helmet.

EXT. AL ASAD AIRBASE - STAGING AREA - DAY

Jen and the team follow Sarraaf and his men toward an ARMORED
PERSONNEL CARRIER, putting on their own helmets. Ammar hands
a flak vest marked "PRESS" to Said.

BECKETT
How close are we getting to the
zero line?

SAID
The what?

JEN
Where the shooting starts.

Said swallows as he tightens his vest.

JEN (CONT'D)
It's okay -- if things get too hot,
we're out of there. Hey...

Said looks up.

JEN (CONT'D)
Thank you for coming.

He manages a weak smile in acknowledgment.

JEN (CONT'D)
Okay.
(to Ammar)
You know the drill.

AMMAR
Keep your heads down...

JEN
Get the story...

AMMAR
...and don't get dead.

Beckett cracks a grin.

BECKETT
Easy enough.

He claps Said on the shoulder, and they climb into the APC's cramped hold, joining the CTS squad. The door CLANGS shut behind them.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The convoy of APCs and Humvees drives through the desert.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

The convoy approaches a wide bridge spanning the Euphrates. It would be a picturesque spot if not for the smoke rising in the distance.

Some of the vehicles split off and take up station near the bridge entrance, while others continue across toward the northern shore of the river.

INT. APC - DAY

Said turns, straining to see out one of the window slits as they roll over the bridge, but he can't make much out.

Jen looks up as the APC rolls to a stop at the northern end of the bridge. Sarraf leans forward to confer with the Trooper driving.

JEN
What's going on?

SARRAF
There's a roadblock ahead. From here, we go on foot.

Said looks like he's about to puke.

JEN
Hey, just stay behind Sarraf's guys, and you'll be okay.

Said nods, but doesn't look convinced.

EXT. BRIDGE - NORTHERN BANK - DAY

CTS Troopers disembark from the APC's rear hatch, heads on a swivel. Jen, Beckett, Said, and Ammar follow.

Signs of a recent battle are everywhere: bullet holes pockmark the concrete wreckage of a small cluster of MAINTENANCE BUILDINGS near the bridge.

The shell of an ABRAMS TANKS lies where missile fire killed it, smoke still coiling from a gaping hole in its side.

Sarraf motions his Troopers forward and carefully steps over a waist-high ROADBLOCK made from rubble. He spots something on the other side: a TRIPWIRE, stretching across the bridge.

One end of the wire wraps around a twisted length of rebar jutting from a rubble pile, and the other has been secured to the pin of a GRENADE duct-taped to the bridge railing.

SARRAF
Look out!

Sarraf carefully steps over the wire and waves his Troopers to follow him.

BECKETT
(re. the wire)
We gonna get rid of this thing or what?

SARRAF
I'll flag it for EOD, let them handle it.

Ammar crosses next.

BECKETT
I can do it.

SARRAF
No.

Beckett shrugs follows the Troopers over. Jen turns to Said, bringing up the rear, and points at the Troopers and Beckett.

JEN
(to Said)
Step where they step.

Said starts over the roadblock. He puts a hand out to steady himself, and the chunk of concrete he touches SHIFTS --

Said loses his balance and pitches toward the tripwire -- and Beckett SHOVES him backwards, knocking him to the ground inches from the wire.

Said lets out a breath, realizing how close he just came.

JEN (CONT'D)
You okay?

Shaken, Said gets out a nod.

SAID
Yes.

Jen crosses the roadblock and helps Said to his feet. They step over the wire together.

SAID (CONT'D)
(to Beckett)
Thank you.

Beckett nods curtly and turns to follow, but then looks back at the wire.

BECKETT
(to himself)
Screw this.

Beckett draws his combat knife and kneels by the wire. Looking back, Sarraf sees and storms toward Beckett.

SARRAF
Hey! Hey, I said no!

Beckett ignores Sarraf and CUTS the wire free from the rebar. Sarraf and the others tense in expectation of a detonation.

Moving in a low crouch, Beckett walks the wire back to the bridge railing and unhooks it from the grenade, then slices through the duct tape.

Beckett tucks the grenade into his vest. Then he stands and rejoins the others, tossing the tripwire at Sarraf's feet as he passes. Jen gets in front of Beckett, forcing him to stop.

JEN

Hey, I brought you out here to --

BECKETT

You brought me out here to do a job. So how about you let me do it?

He steps past her and keeps walking. Sarraf bristles, but decides not to press it. Approaching the tank, he barks out a string of orders and the Troopers break off, spreading out to secure the area.

Jen checks a map, then points out a rocky hill a quarter mile away and turns to Said.

JEN

Ruins should be just over that rise, right?

SAID

Yes, not far.

SARRAF

Okay. Everything looks clear, so you can go.

Said looks surprised.

SAID

You do not come with us?

SARRAF

My orders are to secure the bridge.

AMMAR

It'll be okay.

Jen's group starts for the hill.

SARRAF

Miss Lasky -- keep this on.

He tosses Jen a radio.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

Standing on the hilltop, Jen and the others look down at:

The RUINS of an ANCIENT CITY. Stone arches, pillars, and walls. Even after thousands of years, they remain an awe-inspiring sight.

Jen raises her camera and snaps a picture. Ammar whistles.

SAID

(almost to himself)
I did not think I would be back
here.

BECKETT

They say Alexander the Great built
this place, right?

SAID

Probably sometime around 330
B.C.E., yes. On his way to conquer
the Persians.

AMMAR

Good place for treasure.

JEN

Must be what ISIS thought.

She starts down the hill toward the ruins.

EXT. AL-UMAN RUINS - DAY

On closer inspection, the ruins have been badly damaged by explosives, bullets, and hammer blows. The group moves deeper into the ruins, passing fallen pillars and statues.

JEN

Looks like they had to leave in a
hurry. Said, where would they have
done most of their digging?

He points.

SAID

Towards the center: the Great
Temple.

JEN

Okay. Watch out for more traps.

They head in the direction Said indicated, toward the remnants of the massive GREAT TEMPLE.

Haphazardly bulldozed Excavation pits, tunnels, and trenches scar the area, and ISIS slogans have been graffitied onto the stones. Said shakes his head in disgust as they approach.

SAID

The Sumerians invented writing in Iraq. Early democracy was here, too, long before the Greeks. They call this land the cradle of civilization, but ISIS would see our history destroyed one stone at a time.

(to Beckett)

And people like you.

BECKETT

Least the stuff I take doesn't get blown up.

SAID

It is our history. Our culture. It belongs here, not in a foreign museum.

BECKETT

Seems like this country's got bigger problems than that right now.

SAID

People can survive a hundred wars, but if you destroy their culture, take away everything that makes them who they are...it will be as though they never existed.

JEN

That's why the Nazis burned books.

She stops at the edge of one of the excavation trenches. Sleeping bags, cooking supplies, and other detritus litter the area.

JEN (CONT'D)

Alright, let's start checking these. Ammar -- get the one over there. Said, you're with me.

Ammar and Beckett move off. Said gets into the trench while Jen scours the abandoned supplies nearby.

Moving carefully to avoid any potential booby traps, they pick through the remnants of the dig.

Jen comes upon a small fire pit full of ash and burnt paper. She examines a scrap, but it's useless.

JEN (CONT'D)

Shit...

Said reaches the end of the trench. Nothing in it but discarded tools. He begins to climb up -- and then something on the ground catches his eye.

He kneels down. A METAL EDGE is just visible, peeking out from under a blanket. He pulls the blanket aside to reveal a metal box, held shut by a busted lock.

SAID

Jen! There is something here, I think.

She comes up at a jog, followed by Beckett and Ammar, and slides down into the trench.

JEN

Good eye, Professor.

Jen tries to open the box, but the lid sticks. She pulls a pocketknife from her belt and jams the blade in the crack.

Suddenly, the radio Sarraf gave Jen SQUAWKS.

SARRAF (ON RADIO)

Jen, do you copy? We just got a report of insurgent movement -- you have to get out of there, over.

Tension ripples through the group. Beckett and Ammar exchange a taut glance.

JEN

Solid copy.

She sticks the radio back on her belt and keeps working the knife blade.

AMMAR

Jen?

JEN

Get out of here -- I just need a minute.

BECKETT
We're all going. Right now.

AMMAR
Jen, he's right.

JEN
Just go! Get Said out of here. I'm
right behind you, I promise.

Ammar hesitates for a moment, but then nods at Said.

AMMAR
Come on!

They take off.

BECKETT
This is bullshit, Jen! Move!

Moving with frantic speed, Jen wiggles the blade -- the lid
starts to open --

JEN
Come on, come on, come on --

BECKETT
Leave it!

Beckett grabs her by the arm and starts pulling her out of
the trench. Jen twists away --

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Jesus --

She races back to the box and wrenches it open. There are a
few LOOSE PAPERS inside. Jen grabs them.

JEN
Got it!

BECKETT
NOW, goddammit!

Jen stuffs the papers into her pocket. She and Beckett
scramble out of the trench and break into a run.

They sprint full-tilt through the ruins, heading back toward
the hill they came down when out of nowhere --

They break into a sprint, headed back toward the town when
out of nowhere -- MORTAR FIRE EXPLODES BEHIND THEM!

Jen and Beckett keep going at full tilt as geysers of dirt blast skyward, thrown up by the blasts.

EXT. BRIDGE - NORTHERN BANK - DAY

Moving at a run, Said and Ammar following the CTS Troopers back toward the bridge, passing the wrecked tank.

MORTAR ROUNDS impact around them -- one HITS the APC parked on the bridge, destroying it instantly.

Suddenly, a BLAST catches the Trooper in front of Said. He stares in horror, frozen in place --

AMMAR

[Move!]

Ammar tackles him, dragging him down into cover behind the roadblock next to the Troopers. Sarraf glances back to see Jen and Beckett emerge over the crest of the hill.

SARRAF

Come on!

They haul ass down the hillside, closing the distance to the bridge -- when another EXPLOSION hits close behind them.

The force THROWS Jen to the ground. Beckett doesn't see and keeps going.

Coughing, Jen picks herself up. She starts for the bridge again, but the buzzsaw RATTLE of AUTOMATIC RIFLE FIRE cuts through the air around her --

Bullets slice into the sand and WHINE overhead -- and Jen throws herself into cover behind the wrecked tank.

ON THE BRIDGE

Beckett sprints the last few meters to the bridge and joins the others as Sarraf pulls out his radio.

SARRAF

(into radio)

[Taking heavy fire!]

SARRAF (CONT'D)

Where is Jen?

Beckett looks around, realizes she isn't with them --

BY THE TANK

Jen presses herself to the ground as more bullets SLAM into the hull of the tank.

Indistinct FIGURES appear on the hillside behind her, FIRING small arms.

ON THE BRIDGE

Beckett and the CTS Troopers RETURN FIRE. Ammar spots Jen, caught in the crossfire.

AMMAR

Beckett! We have to help her!

Beckett FIRES off another round, then turns at the sound of Sarraf shouting.

SARRAF

(into radio)

[Request dynamic precision strike
at our mark -- fire for immediate
effect!]

BECKETT

Tell me you didn't just call in a
goddamn airstrike!

AMMAR

Jen is still out there!

Beckett looks back at Jen's position --

BY THE TANK

Jen peeks around the corner of the tank. She jerks her head back as ISIS FIGHTERS spill down the hill, clearly visible for the first time.

Jen looks back toward the bridge -- too far away to run --

ON THE BRIDGE

Beckett loads a new clip, and grabs a pair of smoke grenades from his vest.

BECKETT

Popping smoke!

Beckett pulls the pins out and tosses the grenades toward the tank. RED SMOKE starts billowing out around it.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Sarraf, cover my ass!

SARRAF
Wait, what are you --

Beckett bursts from cover at a run, heading for Jen and FIRING as he goes. Sarraf looks shocked for a moment, but quickly recovers.

SARRAF (CONT'D)
[Covering fire!]

The CTS Soldiers open fire with renewed intensity. Sarraf SHOOTs a burst at a shape moving through the rubble and gets rewarded with a scream as he drops his target.

BY THE TANK

The Fighters move toward the tank, almost on top of Jen as the smoke spreads.

Jen's eyes widen as a FIGHTER with his rifle raised comes around the side of the tank -- and then a BURST OF GUNFIRE hits him and he crumples.

Jen turns to see Beckett emerging from the smoke behind her. He drops into a squat, then rams in a fresh magazine and racks a round.

BECKETT
Jen! You okay?

JEN
Yeah...yeah, I'm good.

He FIRES, taking down another Fighter. Suddenly, something bigger moves in the smoke.

Jen's eyes widen as a HILUX PICKUP rumbles into view, a GUNNER and mounted .50-caliber machine gun on its bed.

BECKETT
Shit, we got a technical!

Jen and Beckett press themselves to the ground.

The .50 sprays the bridge, ripping fist-sized holes in the concrete and taking down two of the Troopers. A rooster tail of spent shell casings cascades into the truck bed.

Beckett pulls the grenade from the booby trap off his vest. He yanks the pin and hurls it at the truck -- the EXPLOSION catches the Gunner, knocking him off the bed.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Smoke's starting to clear -- we
gotta move!

Jen gets up into a low crouch.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Go, go, go!

Jen and Beckett haul ass back toward Sarraf and his men.

Behind them, another FIGHTER hops onto the back of the truck and trains the .50-cal on Jen and Beckett -- bullets ROAR around them --

And then TOWERING EXPLOSIONS HIT THE AREA, obliterating the Fighters. The Hilux takes a DIRECT HIT and EXPLODES.

It's the AIRSTRIKE Sarraf called in.

ON THE BRIDGE

Jen and Beckett dive into cover by Sarraf's squad. She goes fetal, covering her head as dust and debris shower the area.

And then it's over, as quickly as it began. Jen uncurls, checking herself for injuries, but she's in one piece.

EXT. BRIDGE - SOUTHERN BANK - DAY

The area around the end of the bridge has been transformed into an assembly area for arriving American and Iraqi troops together with a makeshift field hospital.

SOLDIERS move urgently, restocking vehicles and loading up on ammo as MEDICS treat the WOUNDED spread out on tarps.

Beckett helps Sarraf a wounded Trooper off his feet. Nearby, Said kneels on the ground and vomits. Ammar puts a comforting hand on his shoulder.

Jen approaches a DELTA OPERATOR lighting a smoke.

JEN
You got another one of those?

He holds out the pack. Jen nods her thanks and takes one. She heads out of sight, behind a row of parked TRUCKS.

Shaking like a leaf, Jen fumbles her lighter but gets it after a few tries and inhales deeply.

Letting the nicotine rush take effect, Jen sinks back against one of the trucks, squeezing her eyes shut. They snap open as Beckett comes around the corner.

BECKETT

What the hell was that back there?

JEN

What are you talking about?

He SHOVES her up against the truck.

BECKETT

The next time you feel like trying to get your ass killed, you do it when I'm not around. Your story isn't worth it.

JEN

Then why did you come back for me?

Some of the fury leaves him and he lets her go.

BECKETT

You die and I don't get paid, right?

JEN

Jesus -- you'll get your money.

BECKETT

You're goddamn right.

He takes a breath and calms himself.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Look, Jen. I know what it's like to lose people. I know how much you want this. But you keep taking risks like that out there today, and all you're going to do is get yourself killed, too.

Beckett walks off, leaving Jen on her own.

INT. THESEUS GROUP HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY - DAY

Dyer strides down the hall, passing busy STAFF. Miller keeps pace with her.

DYER
Still no word on Beckett?

MILLER
None, but we pulled this from a
security camera.

He hands her a photograph of Jen and Ammar talking with
Beckett outside the prison.

DYER
Who is she?

MILLER
Jenna Lasky, a reporter. Our guys
who caught up with Beckett
confirmed she was with him.

DYER
They must be going after the ledger
together.

MILLER
You think?

DYER
Either way, Beckett knows too much.
If he talks to her, this will all
come down around us.

They turn a corner, heading for a pair of automated doors.

INT. THESEUS GROUP HEADQUARTERS - TECH HUB - DAY

The blue glow of screens illuminates the dark space. Six
TECHNICIANS in wireless headsets sit behind monitor banks.
The doors swoosh open and Dyer steps in with Miller.

DYER
Alright people, listen up. New
target: Jenna Lasky. I want the
full sweep: e-mail, phones, anyone
she ever smiled at on the street.

Dyer turns back to Miller.

DYER (CONT'D)
We find her, we find Beckett -- and
the ledger. With any luck, they'll
lead us right to it.

Fingers clatter furiously on keyboards as the Technicians get
to work.

EXT. RAWA - HOTEL - NIGHT

The hotel has become party central as SOLDIERS, CONTRACTORS, and CIVILIANS celebrate the small town's liberation.

They fill the courtyard, drinking beer and getting stoned. Two Americans snap selfies with a captured ISIS flag.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The thin walls barely muffle the noise of the party and HUM of portable generators powering the hotel.

Jen sits on the couch, sipping a beer and looking over the papers from the cave. She looks up as Said comes in.

JEN

Hey.

SAID

Do you think I could borrow your sat phone? I can't get a signal.

Jen pulls the phone from her bag, then pauses.

JEN

Calling home?

SAID

I told Alia I would every chance I could.

JEN

You know...might be better not to.

SAID

Why?

JEN

There may be times you can't. If she gets to expecting it every day, you're just gonna make her worry more. I learned that the hard way on this job.

Said reluctantly nods.

JEN (CONT'D)

You should go down to the party. Enjoy yourself -- you earned it.

SAID

I tried, but...I just couldn't.

He sits down the bed.

JEN

The guys down there, they figure it's easier to get stoned off their asses than to think about it.

SAID

My father fought in the war with Iran. He told me when you get shot at, you don't feel scared -- you feel angry. But out there today, all I could think was how scared I was. I panicked.

Said looks at the floor, shaking his head.

SAID (CONT'D)

I couldn't even move.

JEN

Hey. Just keep your head down, get the story, and...

SAID

...don't get dead.

JEN

All there is to it.

He smiles tenuously.

SAID

At least the soldiers can protect themselves. But...you do not even carry a weapon.

JEN

Enough people want to kill reporters as it is. Usually the one thing stopping them is knowing we can't shoot back.

SAID

You never want to?

JEN

I wouldn't be much of a journalist if I did.

SAID

Even if you found the people who killed Will? You wouldn't want revenge?

Jen thinks that over, deciding how to answer. Decides not to.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Jen, Said, Beckett, and Ammar sit around the table. They all lean in, looking at the papers. Jen is disappointed.

BECKETT

I'm guessing this ain't the ledger?

JEN

No, just digging permits.

SAID

Permits?

JEN

ISIS ran smuggling like a business:
taxes, forms, everything.

AMMAR

There's something here...

He points to a few lines of Arabic text.

AMMAR (CONT'D)

(reading)

"Allawi...archaeologist, 2018."

SAID

Allawi? Massoud Allawi?

The others look at Said.

JEN

You know him?

SAID

Allawi was a historian at the
University of Mosul. He was my
friend -- my mentor, really. But I
thought he was killed in 2014, when
ISIS took over.

JEN

Something tells me he's not dead if
he's still cropping up in their
files.

AMMAR

You think he was working with them?

Said's face falls.

SAID

I cannot believe Allawi would help them -- he cared more than anyone I know about protecting Iraq's history.

Jen searches the name on her laptop and lands on University of Mosul faculty page for MASSOUD ALLAWI (60s). She stares at Allawi's picture as if willing it to divulge something.

AMMAR

Could he have been Will's source?

JEN

In any case, we need to find him. If he did write the ledger, he'll know where it is.

Jen turns to Said.

JEN (CONT'D)

Does he have a family?

Face clouded with doubt, Said looks from her to the picture of Allawi...

EXT. BASRA - DAY

A MUEZZIN'S CALL to the *Salat al-Asr* afternoon prayer drifts across the port city, amplified by speakers mounted on a mosque's turret.

TITLE OVER: BASRA

EXT. BASRA - ALLAWI HOUSE - DAY

A modest house in a middle-class suburb, set back from the street behind a wall with a small garden in the courtyard. Down the street, Jen gets out of the SUV with Ammar and Said.

JEN

Ammar, you good to interpret?

AMMAR

Sure thing.

SAID

(to Jen)

I thought you spoke Arabic?

JEN

Sometimes if people think they know
more than you, they get relaxed.
Maybe say more than they should.

She starts for the house, but shakes her head at Beckett as
he follows.

JEN (CONT'D)

Hang back. Nothing's gonna happen
here.

BECKETT

I'm not taking any chances.

JEN

We need to make a good impression,
and machine guns don't tend to help
with that.

Beckett thinks that over for a moment, then puts his rifle
back in the van.

JEN (CONT'D)

All of them.

Beckett unbuckles his drop-leg holster.

JEN (CONT'D)

Alright, come on.

Putting on a hijab, Jen heads for the house along with Said
and Ammar.

Beckett stows the holster next to his rifle...but pulls the
pistol free and tucks it into the back of his waistband. He
tugs his shirt over it and follows the others.

INT. ALLAWI HOUSE - DAY

Said, Ammar, and Jen sit in the spotless living room facing
two women: RABIA (50s) and TALA (70s). Both mother and
daughter have the same proud demeanor.

Beckett sits a respectful distance further back.

SAID

[I don't know if you remember, but
we met before once at a university
dinner. Together with Massoud.]

RABIA

[Yes, I remember.]

SAID
[I'm afraid we have some difficult
news about him.]

RABIA
[What do you mean? Massoud has been
dead for years.]

JEN
He may still be alive, but we think
he was working with ISIS.

Ammar interprets as gently as he can.

TALA
[But...how can you say this? My son
is dead.]

JEN
He was helping them smuggle
artifacts.

Tala lowers her head. She lets out a low, keening WAIL full
of anguish. Rabia hugs her comfortingly.

SAID
[I'm sorry.]

TALA
[Where did I fail that led him to
this?]

RABIA
[Shh, it's all right.]

Jen leans forward, switching to Arabic.

JEN
[I lost someone very close to me
because of ISIS, too. Please know
that Massoud working for them is
not your fault.]

Shaken, Jen watches Rabia hold Tala, knowing she's powerless
to help them. Ammar exchanges a glance with Said.

AMMAR
We should go.

Said stands, then puts hand on her shoulder.

SAID
Come. There is nothing more we can
do here.

Jen takes a final look, then stands and turns away.

EXT. ALLAWI HOUSE - DAY

Jen sits on the curb, smoking a cigarette.

Standing with Ammar and Said, Beckett watches from down the street by the SUV. There's a hint of concern in his gaze.

Jen turns at the sound of the gate opening behind her. Rabia emerges and moves to join her. Jen stubs out her cigarette as Rabia sits next to her on the curb.

JEN
[Is she alright?]

RABIA
[She will be.]

Jen nods.

JEN
[You already knew Allawi was alive,
didn't you?]

Rabia looks at the ground.

RABIA
[I heard from him once just a few
weeks ago. But I didn't know how to
tell my mother.]

JEN
[I'm sorry.]

RABIA
[We didn't speak for long. He said
people were after him, but he was
going to hide.]

JEN
[Do you know where?]

Rabia holds Jen's gaze, then nods.

EXT. ALLAWI HOUSE - STREET - DAY

Jen points out a location on a map spread out on the hood of the van. Beckett, Said, and Ammar lean in for a closer look.

BECKETT
A refugee camp?

JEN

Actually makes a lot of sense if
he's trying lie low.

AMMAR

They'd let him in without papers if
he was posing as a refugee. Might
not even have to use his real name.

SAID

Who is he hiding from? ISIS?

JEN

Could be.

She folds up the map.

AMMAR

They don't have a Caliphate to tax
any more, so they need funding
however they can get it. They don't
get their money if the artifacts
end up back in a museum.

JEN

We're gonna make sure of it.

Jen sticks the map in her bag.

EXT. PARK - DAY

As the sun sinks toward the horizon, Beckett, Said, and Ammar
dig in to plates of falafel at a picnic table.

Jen sits apart from them at another table with her back
turned, looking out at the Shatt al-Arab river, sat phone to
her ear.

JEN

That's what we've got so far. We
can make the camp by afternoon if
we leave first thing in the
morning.

Jen rubs her eyes. She looks drained.

INT. CHANDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Chandra paces her office, on the phone.

CHANDRA

Okay. And Jen...

She hesitates a moment.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Even over the phone, Chandra's concern is evident.

CHANDRA (ON PHONE)
Are you still up for this?

JEN
I'm fine.

It doesn't sound convincing.

CHANDRA (ON PHONE)
Alright. Stay safe.

Beckett watches as Jen hangs up. He stands after a moment and picks up a plate. Ammar sees and shakes his head.

AMMAR
Probably best to leave her alone
when she gets like this.

Beckett ignores this and walks toward Jen. She looks around as he sits down next to her, holding out the plate. Jen takes it but doesn't eat and toys with her ring instead.

JEN
You know, I used to wear a fake one
of these.

BECKETT
Stop guys like Ammar from hitting
on you?

Jen smiles.

JEN
Training courses tell you that if
you get kidnapped, it makes you
more sympathetic.

Beckett takes this in as Jen's smile fades.

JEN (CONT'D)
All this time I keep thinking, why
him? If I had been out there
instead, maybe things would be
different. Maybe he'd still be
here. But I had already gone back
home, because one of us needed to
pick a cake.

She shakes her head at the irony.

JEN (CONT'D)

That's pretty messed up, isn't it?

Beckett watches a CONTAINER SHIP slowly cruise down the waterway, his eyes distant.

BECKETT

About ten years ago, my unit was on patrol when one of our Humvees broke down.

He continues without turning to face her.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

I tried to convince my CO to let us just blow it, but policy was not to let any equipment behind. So, he ordered us to tow it back to base. 'Course by that point, we'd been stuck in the same place for two hours, so the whole country knew where we were. Couldn't go more than ten miles an hour with the goddamn thing hitched up, and that's when we got hit.

JEN

Jesus...

BECKETT

Six guys dead, eight wounded. I'm still not sure how any of us made it back.

JEN

I'm sorry.

They sit in silence for a long moment.

BECKETT

You know, guilt...it'll take away everything you have left of him. If you don't let him go, all you'll have left is the pain.

There are tears in Jen's eyes, but she manages a nod.

INT. THESEUS GROUP HEADQUARTERS - TECH HUB - NIGHT

A bleary-eyed TECHNICIAN walks back to his station with a cup of coffee. Suddenly, an alert PINGS on his screen.

Startled, he drops the coffee and starts to curse - but stops short when he catches sight of the screen. He hurries to pull on his headset.

TECHNICIAN

We got a hit -- she just used her phone.

On the screen, a blinking dot appears in Basra.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - PARKING AREA - DAY

Ammar's van pulls to a stop and Jen and the others get out. She walks a few steps forward, looking out at the sea of white TENTS spreading out in front of them. Beckett joins her as she clicks pictures.

BECKETT

You really think he's in there?

Jen nods without taking her eye from the camera viewfinder as she snaps a few pictures of Ammar and Said near the van.

JEN

He's here.

BECKETT

If you say so.

He chuckles, impressed by her confidence. Jen smiles, then takes a picture of him. She shoulders her bag and starts down the hill.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - ENTRY POINT - DAY

US ARMY RANGERS check two groups of REFUGEES, mostly WOMEN, CHILDREN, and OLDER MEN. A CAPTAIN shouts orders while an Iraqi INTERPRETER relays.

RANGER CAPTAIN

Iraqis go here. Syrians, here.

Rangers walk among the groups, asking questions, taking photos, and handing out plastic pouches and lanyards.

RANGER CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

If you have IDs, display them clearly around your necks.

Off to one side, a third group of MALE REFUGEES stands in a single-file line.

A Ranger keeps an eye on them from the turret of a HUMVEE as more Rangers walk down the line with a SNIFFER DOG. After each Refugee has been checked, they move off to the side and sit in a group -- some with their hands cuffed.

YASMIN, a camp administrator, leads Jen, Beckett, Said, and Ammar past all of it toward the camp entrance.

YASMIN

You must understand: we do our best to check people's identities when they arrive, but many of them come to us with just the clothes on their backs.

Jen slows, taking in the line of male Refugees.

JEN

Those guys are all suspected ISIS, yeah?

YASMIN

Yes.

They watch as a struggle breaks out between the Rangers and one of the hostile Refugees. A Ranger SLAMS the butt of his rifle into his gut, dropping him to his knees.

RANGER CAPTAIN

Hey! Hey, that's enough -- just get him with the others.

The Rangers pull the Man's hands behind his back and cinch them together with cable ties. Said looks disturbed as the Rangers drag the hostile Man off.

JEN

If there are people who worked with Allawi here, that's the group they'll be with. Can we get talk to them?

YASMIN

Maybe...

Yasmin approaches the Captain. Jen follows, holding up her press pass.

YASMIN (CONT'D)

Can she speak to some of the detainees?

RANGER CAPTAIN

Sorry, ma'am. No go.

JEN
 (under her breath)
 Shit...
 (to the group)
 We start in the camp, then.

She turns back to the camp.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

REFUGEES are everywhere.

An ELDERLY MAN cooks rice on a propane stove. WOMEN, some of them in black abayas and niqabs, sort through piles of clothes. A TEENAGE GIRL tries to separate two wrestling BOYS.

Jen and the others take it all in as they come into the camp.

YASMIN
 You can look through our records database, but it will take time.

JEN
 Ammar, that's you.

He grins.

AMMAR
 Thought you'd never ask.

JEN
 Call if you find anything. Beckett, Said, you're with me.

AMMAR
 You got it, boss.

YASMIN
 Good luck.

Yasmin and Ammar head off into the camp. Said looks to Jen.

SAID
 What do we do?

JEN
 Start talking to people.

BECKETT
 Looks like someone's interested already.

Several REFUGEES approach them.

YOUNG WOMAN

[I'm looking for my brother, can you help? He's only thirteen --]

MAN ON CRUTCHES

[We just want to get back home, but they don't tell us anything. Will you talk to the administrators?]

ELDERLY WOMAN

[No one knows where my son is --]

More Refugees gather around Jen and the others, talking over each other. She motions for calm.

JEN

[Please. Please, I will do everything I can to make sure your stories are told, but I need your help first.]

Jen pulls out her phone and holds up a picture of Allawi.

JEN (CONT'D)

[It's very important that I find this man. Has anyone seen him here?]

A few of the Refugees lose interest, and turn away. A TEENAGE BOY shakes his head.

TEENAGE BOY

[I'm sorry, no.]

The Man on crutches leans in for a closer look.

MAN ON CRUTCHES

[Who is he?]

JEN

[His name is Massoud Allawi. He might be going by something different, though.]

MAN ON CRUTCHES

[I haven't seen him.]

Jen shows the picture to a WOMAN in an abaya. Another head shake in response.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - TRAILER - DAY

Camp HQ. Harried ADMINISTRATORS and AID WORKERS in cubicles grind away at computers and talk into phones. In the back, Ammar watches Yasmin boot up a laptop.

YASMIN

I'm afraid our system has been
having all sorts of problems so a
direct search is impossible. You'll
have to go through page by page.

The photo database appears on the computer screen: rows of mugshots laid out yearbook style. Ammar sits at the computer and scrolls down the page, scanning the photos.

AMMAR

How many pages are there?

YASMIN

Almost four hundred.

Ammar whistles -- this could take a while.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

The last of the crowd around Jen disperses. She lights a cigarette and takes a drag in frustration as she rejoins Beckett and Said.

BECKETT

You don't know when to quit, do
you? We gonna do this with the
whole camp?

SAID

Do you have a better idea?

He doesn't. Jen stares at the ground as she takes another pull, trying to recharge.

Suddenly, she hears LAUGHTER and SHOUTING. She looks up to see a group of KIDS playing soccer nearby. Beckett follows her gaze, confused.

BECKETT

What is it?

JEN

Kids go everywhere in a place like
this. If Allawi's here and anyone
saw him, there's as good a chance
as any that it was them.

She flicks her cigarette away and walks towards the Kids.
Said and Beckett follow her.

JEN (CONT'D)
[Hey there.]

The Kids ignore her. Jen takes out a candy bar.

JEN (CONT'D)
[Guess I just have to eat this
myself...]

This gets attention. The Kids mob her as she hands out more.

JEN (CONT'D)
[I wonder, can any of you help me
with something?]

LITTLE BOY
[What is it?]

JEN
[We're looking for a friend of
ours. Have any of you seen him?]

Jen pulls out her phone, showing around the picture of
Allawi. Beckett watches, skeptical, and mutters to himself.

BECKETT
Jesus, why don't you ask 'em if
they've found Amelia Earhart too.

JEN
[Anyone?]

LITTLE GIRL
[Come on, let's go. This is
boring!]

LITTLE BOY
[Yeah!]

The Kids scamper off laughing. One LITTLE GIRL (ZAHRA) hangs
back, eyeing Jen cautiously. Jen kneels down.

JEN
[Hi there, I'm Jen. What's your
name?]

ZAHRA
[Zahra.]

Said kneels next to Jen.

SAID
[Tell me, Zahra, have you seen our
friend?]

Zahra nods as she inches forward, staring at Jen's camera.
Jen holds it up with an encouraging smile and snaps a
picture. Zahra giggles.

JEN
[He's a tall man, right?]
(re. Said)
[Bigger than him?]

Zahra nods again.

JEN (CONT'D)
[And he has brown eyes?]

Zahra shakes her head, looking away from her chocolate for
the first time.

ZAHRA
[They were green.]

Beckett watches with sudden interest. Said meets Jen's eye.
She pats her bag.

JEN
[You know, I have something here
extra special that I brought to
give my friend when we find him.]

Jen pulls out a compass. Zahra's face lights up. She reaches
for it, but Jen pulls it back.

JEN (CONT'D)
[Ah-ah-ah. It's not for you. But
maybe if you can show us where he
is...]
(to Said)
[I don't know, do you think we
could give it to her instead?]

Said strokes his chin thoughtfully, playing along.

SAID
[Hmm. I don't think she knows where
he is.]

ZAHRA
[Yes I do! I'll show you!]

Zahra takes off at a run.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - SHANTIES - DAY

Jen, Beckett and Said follow Zahra through a particularly run-down section of the camp, passing rows of shanties and piles of garbage.

Zahra comes to a stop behind a fence and looks around the corner. She beckons the others forward.

ZAHRA

[Come see.]

Jen joins her at the fence. They look out at another collection of tents and shacks. There are Refugees around, but none of them are obviously Allawi...

BECKETT

Don't see anything...

ZAHRA

(pointing)

[That's his tent, just there.]

Said shakes his head in disappointment...but then Beckett tenses as he clocks a MAN approaching the tent, carrying a ration bag.

The man looks grayer and careworn compared to Jen's photo, but it's ALLAWI.

BECKETT

Well I'll be...

ZAHRA

[See? I told you.]

JEN

[Yes, you did.]

Jen kneels and hands her the compass. Zahra grins, reverently taking it like it's a treasure.

JEN (CONT'D)

[You earned this. Now go on, okay?]

Zahra runs off. For a moment, a Jen gets a thoughtful, faraway look in her eyes as she watches the girl disappear into the camp. Jen notices Said watching.

SAID

You were good with her.

JEN

You too.

Jen rises, then turns toward Allawi's tent. She notices Beckett standing still.

JEN (CONT'D)
You coming?

BECKETT
You need to make a good impression,
and machine guns don't tend to help
with that, right?

Jen smiles in acknowledgment.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - OVERLOOK - DAY

A RED CRESCENT LAND ROVER rolls to a stop next to the group's van. The passenger's side window descends to reveal Miller, wearing a doctor's vest and pass.

Harris, at the wheel, Kelly, and Green are with him in the Land Rover. They're all dressed the same as Miller.

KELLY
That's their van.

Beckett hands her a quarter-sized black disc.

BECKETT
Get this on there, just in case.
Somewhere they won't find it.

Kelly takes the disc.

INT. ALLAWI'S TENT - DAY

Allawi fiddles with a small propane stove. He looks up as Jen and Said step into the tent. After a moment, his eyes go wide as he recognizes Said.

ALLAWI
[Said...?]

Allawi stands and embraces Said, smiling.

ALLAWI (CONT'D)
[It's so good to see you.]

His smile drops.

ALLAWI (CONT'D)
[But what are you doing here? It's
not safe.]
(MORE)

ALLAWI (CONT'D)
(re. Jen)
[And who is she?]

SAID
[It's a long story.]

Allawi looks from him to Jen uncertainly.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - ENTRY POINT - DAY

The Red Crescent Land Rover pulls to a stop at the checkpoint. The Ranger Captain on duty approaches.

RANGER CAPTAIN
Papers?

Miller holds out a clipboard of paperwork for approval.

MILLER
Afternoon.

After looking over the papers for a moment, the Captain waives them through.

INT./EXT. LAND ROVER IN REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

The Land Rover cruises down a muddy stretch of road. Harris pulls out of sight behind a row of prefab buildings.

MILLER
Alright, I don't feel like walking through this maze of shit any longer than I have to. Let's get the Little Bird up.

KELLY
Roger that.

She pulls out a hard black case and opens it to reveal a SURVEILLANCE DRONE.

INT. ALLAWI'S TENT - DAY

Jen and Said sit opposite Allawi.

SAID
Massoud, please. I have to know.
Did you really work for them?

Allawi looks at the ground, ashamed.

ALLAWI

I did what I needed to.

SAID

And at what cost? Do you have any idea how much history you helped them destroy?

Allawi's head snaps up, suddenly defiant.

ALLAWI

You could have stayed behind at the museum in Mosul like I did. You could have tried to hide the artifacts from them, but you left.

SAID

I was trying to protect my family.

ALLAWI

So was I. But when I tried to leave, it was too late -- they said they would find my mother and sister if I didn't help them. So don't judge me for making a choice you never had to.

That hangs in the air for a long moment.

JEN

And the ledger? It was you who wrote it?

ALLAWI

Yes.

Allawi sighs as he remembers.

ALLAWI (CONT'D)

I wasn't proud of working for them, believe me. But I copied files. I wrote down everything I could, hoping that someday it might be a way to recover the artifacts I helped steal.

JEN

Where is it?

ALLAWI

And why should I trust you? I tried talking to a reporter before. He said he would help, but he never did.

JEN

He's dead.

ALLAWI

What?

Jen stares at Allawi with cold rage. He lowers his gaze.

ALLAWI (CONT'D)

I am sorry -- I did not know.

Allawi collects himself and continues.

ALLAWI (CONT'D)

The fighters I was moved me from al-Uman to their dig at Samsara. I managed to escape during the battle when they got pushed out, but I had to leave the ledger behind.

SAID

So it is at Samsara? The caves?

Jen leans closer.

JEN

Will you take us there?

ALLAWI

If you take back the artifacts, the men who kept me will know someone betrayed them. You can't protect me from them -- no one can.

JEN

I have contacts in the Army -- we can get you to a military base in two hours.

ALLAWI

You think I trust them?

Allawi shakes his head.

ALLAWI (CONT'D)

I made it this far on my own. I'll take my chances.

SAID

We spoke with your family.

Allawi looks at Said in surprise, clearly affected.

SAID (CONT'D)
They want you to come home.

JEN
If you want to make it back to your
family, coming with us is the best
chance you've got.

Allawi thinks this over...

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

The DRONE buzzes overhead, winding steadily through the camp.

INT. LAND ROVER - MOVING - DAY

As the Land Rover rolls through the camp, Miller scans the
passing Refugees.

MILLER
Still nothing?

Kelly shakes her head no as she watches the drone camera's
LIVE FEED from a laptop.

EXT. ALLAWI'S TENT - DAY

Beckett leans against the wall, keeping a careful eye on
passing Refugees.

Suddenly, a WHINE cuts through the noise of the camp. The
drone comes into view -- Beckett straightens as he sees it.

INT. ALLAWI'S TENT - DAY

Jen pulls out her phone.

JEN
I'm gonna let Sarraf know we're
coming --

Beckett bursts in.

BECKETT
We have to move!

Allawi jumps to his feet at the sight of Beckett. Jen motions
for calm.

JEN
He's with me.
(to Beckett)
What is it?

BECKETT
There's no time, just go!

They head for the door.

INT. LAND ROVER - MOVING - DAY

Kelly looks up from the laptop. The screen shows Jen and the others running at full tilt from Allawi's tent.

KELLY
Uh, boss? Think I got something.

Miller's face tightens in a smile.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - ALLEY - DAY

Jen and the others haul ass down a trash-strewn alley between two rows of shanties. They've almost made it to the end when Allawi halts dead in his tracks.

ALLAWI
No, wait!

Jen stops just before they leave the alley.

Beckett motions the others into cover against the wall. As Said catches his breath, Jen peeks around the corner, following Beckett's eyeline to see:

The Land Rover cruising through the camp. Jen ducks back around the corner.

JEN
What is it?

ALLAWI
Mercenaries -- they're hunting me.

Beckett's face darkens.

BECKETT
Theseus Group. Lose your phones --
that must be how they found us.

JEN
You know them?

BECKETT

Look, you can interview me all you want, but we gotta get out of here first. Trust me.

Not much choice. Jen tosses her phone into the trash pile at their feet and crushes it with the heel of her boot. Said does the same. Beckett checks around the corner again.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Just give it a minute until they pass...

Suddenly, the drone appears over the alley behind them. Beckett whirls at the noise, raising his rifle to fire --

JEN

Wait!

She pushes the weapon toward the ground.

JEN (CONT'D)

You start shooting and the whole goddamn camp's gonna know where we are. Last thing we need is more attention!

BECKETT

You got a better idea?

Jen casts about and snatches a bottle from the garbage as the drone swoops in low.

INT. LAND ROVER - MOVING - DAY

Kelly watches the camera's live feed as Jen HURLS the bottle at the drone -- the camera lens CRACKS as the bottle hits it. It wobbles, then nosedives to the ground as the drone CRASHES. The laptop screen erupts in a blizzard of static.

KELLY

Shit! We lost the drone.

She slams the laptop shut in frustration.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - MARKET AREA - DAY

AID WORKERS, VENDORS operating carts, and REFUGEES standing in line for food, water, and gas turn in confusion as Jen and the others run past.

Allawi turns to look behind them--

-- and KNOCKS into a food cart, barreling it over. The furious Vendor SHOUTS at him, and the Refugees around them clamor forward in frustration.

CAMP SECURITY GUARDS notice the confusion and approach --

BECKETT

Come on!

Jen pulls Allawi to his feet and gets him moving.

INT./EXT. LAND ROVER IN MARKET AREA - DAY

Looking out his window, Miller spots the commotion. Beckett and Said break into view, followed by Jen and Allawi.

MILLER

There!

Harris turns to follow them, but the Crowd is too dense.

HARRIS

There's too many people!

MILLER

Ground game now.

Miller swings his door open and Harris parks the Land Rover.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Harris, stay in the vehicle, see if you can get around. Kelly, Green, keep after them -- I'll try to cut 'em off.

GREEN

Copy that.

Kelly and Green follow Miller out. He splits off, breaking into a run as Kelly and Green head deeper into the camp after Jen and the others.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - TENTS - DAY

Jen, Allawi, Beckett, and Said cut a straight path through a quiet section of tents devoid of any Refugees.

BECKETT

We're almost out of this --

Suddenly, Miller appears around a tent about twenty yards away. Jen and the others drop into cover behind an overflowing dumpster.

SAID
(hushed)
Did he see us?

Beckett holds a finger to his lips. Miller moves between the tents with practiced efficiency. He draws a PISTOL from his belt and screws on a suppressor.

Said trembles, barely breathing. Miller gets closer -- he's only a few yards away.

Beckett moves quietly, motioning the others to follow him toward a half-collapsed tent nearby. They edge around the dumpster, keeping it between them and Miller as he passes by.

Beckett and the others make it behind the tent. Miller keeps going -- he hasn't seen them. Jen lets out a breath in relief. And then her phone BUZZES.

She immediately shuts it off, but Miller stops. He cocks his head -- he's heard something. He turns around and approaches the tent.

Behind it, Beckett silently slides his combat knife free of its sheath -- ready to strike.

Miller is almost to the tent...but the sound of Kelly and Green approaching at a jog brings him up short as he turns to meet them.

MILLER
You got eyes on 'em?

GREEN
No, sir.

MILLER
Shit...

Miller looks back at the tent. He tenses, raising his pistol, and whips around the corner. No one there.

Miller punches the side of the tent in frustration. He touches his ear, speaking into an earpiece.

MILLER (CONT'D)
Harris? Get to the south entrance,
we're coming to you.

Miller and the Contractors head off.

Jen, Beckett, Said, and Allawi watch from their hiding place behind a nearby tent. Moving at a crouch, Jen beckons them to follow her back into the camp.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - TRAILER - DAY

Ammar answers his ringing phone.

AMMAR

Jen! Allawi is here; I found his picture. I just tried to call --

Jen cuts him off --

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

Jen keeps her voice low as she moves.

JEN

(into phone)

Yeah, no shit -- just meet us back at the van. And move your ass.

She hangs up without waiting for a response.

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - SOUTHERN ENTRY POINT - DAY

Harris walks to meet Miller and the other Contractors as they approach the Land Rover.

MILLER

Got any movement on the tracker?

HARRIS

Yes, sir, just now.

MILLER

Show me.

They reach the Humvee. Harris opens a laptop on the hood, displaying a map with a BLINKING DOT on the move away from the camp.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The team's van drives back toward Baghdad.

INT. VAN - MOVING - DAY

Ammar drives with Beckett riding shotgun. Jen and Said ride with Allawi in the back. They have their flak vests on.

JEN

Alright, who the hell were those guys?

BECKETT

The people who hired me to find the ledger in the first place.

SAID

What does a private military company want with it?

BECKETT

Same thing ISIS did -- their ticket to the treasure.

Said shakes his head.

SAID

And you helped them.

Beckett looks back at Jen.

BECKETT

You knew people were after me.

JEN

Yeah, "people". Not a company with their own private army.

AMMAR

Might have mentioned that sooner.

BECKETT

Look, this doesn't change our deal. We know where the ledger is -- they don't. We can get there first.

Jen skewers Beckett with a glare. Allawi looks up, eyes wide with concern.

ALLAWI

You are taking me to the base first still, yes?

JEN

Don't worry, we'll get you there.

BECKETT

As soon as we find the ledger and I get paid, I'm gone. You write your story, and everybody's happy.

JEN

Goddamn well better be.

Jen takes a breath and pulls it together. She looks back out her window, done with this conversation.

INT. THESEUS GROUP HEADQUARTERS - TECH HUB - DAY

Dyer sweeps into the room.

DYER

Tell me you have their location.

TECH

Confirming it now.

DYER

On-screen.

The Tech nods, and hits a few keys. A DRONE'S AERIAL VIEW of the van winks into place on the room's central screen. Dyer touches her earpiece.

DYER (CONT'D)

Miller? You're green -- get them alive if you can.

ON THE SCREEN, the van crosses a busy intersection headed toward a marketplace.

INT./EXT. VAN IN MARKETPLACE - DAY

The van turns a corner into a colorful outdoor market crowded with SHOPPERS and VENDORS. Traffic slows to a crawl.

ALLAWI

We are close, yes?

JEN

A few miles. We just have to get through this.

Allawi nods nervously. He takes a creased photograph from his pocket -- a picture of him together with Tala and Rabia -- and touches it gently. Said watches, deeply moved, then puts a hand on his friend's shoulder.

SAID
[You will see them again soon. I
promise.]

Allawi swallows, doing his best to return Said's encouraging smile, then puts the picture back.

In the passenger seat, Beckett looks out his window, craning his neck to see the source of the slowdown.

A TRUCK has broken down up ahead, blocking a lane. The DRIVER stands over the smoking hood, waving at oncoming cars to move around him.

As Ammar looks for an opening to get over from the blocked lane, Beckett scans the other vehicles and marketplace around them, then adjusts his grip on his rifle.

JEN
You see something?

Beckett shakes his head without looking at her.

BECKETT
If something's gonna go down, this
is the place for it.

Tensing visibly, Jen eyes the bustling market. She hands Allawi her helmet.

JEN
Put this on.

Allawi's fingers shake as he tightens the chinstrap. Beckett slowly rolls down his window and thumbs his weapon's safety.

The van inches forward, getting closer to the stopped truck. The Driver waves them on, still hunched over his open hood. The last car in front of the van merges, leaving open road between them and the truck. Ammar begins to merge when --

The Driver lifts a concealed AUTOMATIC RIFLE from underneath the truck's open hood and advances on the van.

BECKETT
Get down, get down --

The Driver OPENS FIRE -- the van's front windshield CRACKS, spiderwebbing under the impact.

Jen, Said, and Allawi drop to the floor as Beckett FIRES through his open window -- he DROPS the man to the street. Shoppers and Vendors scatter in panic, SCREAMING.

Drivers CRUNCH fenders as they try to get away, but just cause more of a pile-up. Some abandon their vehicles and run from the scene.

Jen risks a glance up and spots a FLASH of something in the crowd -- and then it's clear: THREE GUNMEN approaching the van through the market. Theseus Contractors in ski masks.

JEN

Gun! Gun, on the right!

Jen hunches down as the Gunmen OPEN UP. She covers her head as SHATTERED GLASS showers them, SLICING her forehead open.

Beckett adjusts his aim and TAKES DOWN one of the Gunmen, sending the others ducking for cover --

When SHOT punches through the driver's side door, HITTING Ammar in the leg. Another IMPACTS on his flak vest. He pitches back -- unconscious, or worse.

JEN (CONT'D)

No!

Beckett whirls to see TWO MORE GUNMEN approaching from the left. A SHOT clips him in the arm.

BECKETT

Goddammit!

Swinging around, Beckett squeezes off a few more rounds.

JEN

We have to get out of here!

BECKETT

Get in the driver's seat, now!

The RATTLE of GUNFIRE is deafening as the remaining Gunmen close in on the van from all sides. Beckett FIRES another burst and drops one of them --

Staying as low as she can, Jen moves toward the front of the van. She rises up to pull Ammar from the driver's seat when a shot SLAMS into her gut.

The flak vest catches it, but it hits like a sledgehammer, knocking her to the floor. She CRIES OUT in pain.

SAID

Jen!

Gasping for breath, Jen manages to claw Ammar's unconscious body from the seat with Beckett's help.

She gets behind the wheel, teeth gritted with determination -- struggling to block out the pain -- and puts it into reverse.

The tires SQUEAL as she tries to go left around the stopped truck, but CRUNCHES to a halt against an abandoned car blocking the way. The van's engine STALLS.

BECKETT

Back up, back up, back up!

JEN

I'm trying -- it's stuck!

She turns the keys again, but the engine won't catch -- one of the Gunmen reaches the side of the stuck van and wrenches one of the back doors open.

He SEIZES Said's legs, trying to drag him from the van. Said clutches wildly at Allawi and hangs on with desperate strength --

Beckett swings his rifle to target the Gunman -- but it CLICKS empty. Without skipping a beat, Beckett drops it and draws his pistol.

He FIRES into the Gunman point-blank until he goes limp and falls away from the van, letting go of Said. Jen turns the key again -- and the engine ROARS back to life! She throws the gearshift into reverse.

Wrenching the wheel into a turn, she aims for a gap between two abandoned market stalls at the mouth of an intersecting side street. The van SMASHES the stalls aside as it plows through --

INT./EXT. VAN ON SIDE STREETS - DAY

Jen pulls a rough J-turn to reverse the car, speeding deeper into the warren of alleyways. She wipes her eye free of blood from the cut on her forehead.

Suddenly, a fresh RATTLE of machine gun fire pounds into the back of the van, SHATTERING the rear window.

A HUMVEE tears into view behind the van. A CONTRACTOR drives, and another appears through the rooftop turret, FIRING his assault rifle --

JEN

Behind us!

BECKETT

Don't stop, don't stop!

Jen hammers the accelerator to the floor.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Here!

Beckett slides his pistol along the floor toward Said. Eyes wide with panic, Said picks up the gun as Beckett pulls a new clip from his vest.

Saida aims at the pursuing Humvee -- he has an opening, he could shoot --

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Shoot him, goddammit!

But he hesitates, frozen. Another BURST from the Contractor in the turret shakes Said back to his senses and he ducks down, dropping the pistol.

Beckett slams the new clip home and gets out of the passenger seat, moving back for a better angle, and FIRES.

Jen clocks an intersecting street approaching and yanks on her seatbelt --

JEN

Hang on!

The van's tires SCREAM in protest as Jen makes the turn. Her side-view mirror catches on the corner and cracks off.

The Humvee ROARS through the turn behind them seconds later, gaining speed --

ON A PARALLEL SIDE STREET

Miller accelerates in another Humvee. He glances to the side and catches a glimpse of the van before it disappears into the next block. Miller puts his foot down, keeping pace --

MAIN ALLEY

Behind the van, the Contractor in the turret FIRES again -- AND HITS ALLAWI IN THE CHEST. He pitches back, stunned with the impact.

SAID

No!

(to Jen)

Massoud is hit!

Flushed with adrenaline as she struggles to keep the wheel straight, Jen looks back over her shoulder.

JEN

You have to stop the bleeding!

SAID

With what?!

Jen pulls off her scarf and tosses it back. Said presses it against the wound. Allawi's eyes are wide with shock as he coughs raggedly.

Beckett takes careful aim and FIRES. He takes out the front tires on the Humvee -- then shoots through the window, HITTING the Driver --

The Humvee skids wildly to the side as the Driver loses control -- it CATCHES the edge of the sidewalk, SPINS onto its side -- and hits the wall of a building with a CRASH, coming to a dead halt.

Beckett turns his attention back to Said and Allawi.

SAID (CONT'D)

It's not working!

He takes the scarf from Said, doing what he can to stop Allawi's bleeding -- with no success.

BECKETT

Come on, come on, stay with me.

Fingers trembling, Allawi slips something into Said's hands. His picture -- but something else is with it.

About eight inches long, it appears ancient: a rectangular stone KEY, with one flat end and another carved in the shape of a bull's head.

Said stares at in confusion as Allawi's breath comes in rapid gasps...then stops altogether. Jen risks a glance to the back as they shoot through another intersection. And then --

MILLER'S HUMVEE SLAMS DIRECTLY INTO THE SIDE OF THE VAN.

The T-bone collision crushes the van against a telephone pole. Metal CRUMPLES like tissue paper. Whiplash THROWS Jen against the side of the car.

INT. THESEUS GROUP HEADQUARTERS - TECH HUB - DAY

Dyer takes in the overhead view of the crash with tight-lipped satisfaction.

INT./EXT. VAN IN INTERSECTION - DAY

The world goes BLURRY for Jen as her breathing echoes in her RINGING EARS. She can just make out the black-clad SHAPE exiting the Humvee and approaching.

Jen struggles to move, but she slumps back in her seat. The world goes dark as her eyes slip shut...

BLACKNESS.

Indistinct VOICES give orders. A heavy door CLANGS shut.

The darkness lessens slightly as a bag is pulled off Jen's head. Starting to come to, her eyes crack open. A blindingly harsh pair of FLOODLIGHTS snap on.

Jen squints, trying to get oriented. She blinks as the space around her comes into focus -- she's in:

INT. THESEUS GROUP HEADQUARTERS - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Jen slumps, halfway on her feet, her hands cuffed over her head to a chain on a pulley rig. Metal bindings secure her bare feet to an eyelet in the floor.

Jen shivers in the cold -- her jacket and shirt have been stripped away, leaving her in her tank-top.

The outline of a FIGURE emerges in the shadows. Dyer steps forward into the light and stops a few feet away from Jen.

DYER

So: Jenna Lasky, the reporter.

Jen's voice comes out in a hoarse croak.

JEN

No one...calls me Jenna.

Dyer smiles faintly.

DYER

I've read your work. It's well done.

JEN

Where are my friends?

Dyer ignores that and starts to circle Jen.

DYER

I don't know what you may have heard about me or this company, but I'd hoped that you of all people could appreciate what we're doing here.

JEN

Me of all people?

DYER

You've been on the ground. Face to face with the enemy. You know better than most: ISIS isn't defeated, they're resurgent. I won't apologize for refusing to fight terror with one hand tied behind my back.

JEN

And selling off another country's cultural legacy is just your proper compensation, is that it?

Dyer pauses as she comes back around Jen.

DYER

I see you talked to Beckett.

Dyer beckons to someone. Jen cranes her neck to see Miller step from the shadows behind her. He holds a remote connected to the pulley above her. Jen flinches, her breath growing rapid as Dyer steps closer.

DYER (CONT'D)

Where is the ledger?

JEN

I don't know what you're talking about.

Miller hits a button on the remote. The chain pulley snaps taught, yanking Jen fully upright. With her feet held in place, her arms are forced to stretch higher. She grunts at the pain, jaw clenched shut.

Dyer holds up the key Allawi gave Said, still stained with his blood.

DYER
What is this? Is it a key?

JEN
(through gritted teeth)
I don't know.

She struggles to keep her feet on the ground and take the strain off her shoulders.

DYER
You should know that the longer
this takes, the more it will hurt.
Where is the ledger?

JEN
Fuck you.

Miller lowers Jen with a chuckle.

MILLER
You're getting the same look Will
did.

Jen's head snaps up, looking from Miller to Dyer.

JEN
What...do you mean? What does he
mean?!

Miller hits the remote again. Jen SCREAMS as the chain jerks her off the ground, higher than before.

DYER
He didn't even realize it, but he
was getting close. We had to act.

Jen's eyes stream as she reels, trying to absorb this and handle the physical pain at the same time.

Miller lowers her again after a long moment. Jen coughs, getting her breath back.

JEN
You? You killed him?

Dyer steps in close -- only inches between them. She wipes Jen's cheek clean.

DYER
The men and women of this company
bleed for their country, and the
government turns its back on them.
(MORE)

DYER (CONT'D)

They deserve better -- they deserve
what's in that ledger.

JEN

And you couldn't have Will telling
the world all your dirty little
secrets.

Dyer steps back.

DYER

I'm going to ask one more time:
where is it?

JEN

My editor knows as much I do. If
she doesn't hear from me in twenty-
four hours, she runs the story.

Dyer shakes her head.

DYER

And here I thought journalists lied
better.

Dyer heads for the door.

DYER (CONT'D)

Maybe your friends will be more
cooperative. You had better hope
so, for their sake.

Miller reaches for the remote again.

JEN

I know where the ledger is.

Dyer raises a hand, stopping Miller short. She turns back.

JEN (CONT'D)

I can take you right to it.

DYER

Or I can have Miller get it out of
you right now.

JEN

Do that, and you'll never see a
dime of that money.

Dyer exchanges a glance with Miller. For the first time,
there's a flicker of uncertainty in her eyes.

JEN (CONT'D)
If my editor runs the story, you're finished.

DYER
You're bluffing.

JEN
Can you really afford to take that chance?

Jen senses her opening as Dyer weighs the choice...

JEN (CONT'D)
Look, you do this -- you let my friends go -- and I'll call my editor. We walk away from this whole thing. No story.

DYER
And you would really do that? Give it all up just for them?

Jen holds Dyer's stare and doesn't break.

EXT. THESEUS GROUP AIRSTRIP - DAWN

Harris and Green march Jen, hands cuffed, past a pair of BLACK HAWK HELICOPTERS. Ten more CONTRACTORS in full battle rattle finish their gear-up nearby. Kelly is among them.

Jen spots Beckett, Said, and Ammar, seated with their backs against a stack of storage crates, also cuffed and looking worse for wear. Ammar has a bandage around his leg wound.

Beckett rises as he sees her. Harris and Green shove Jen towards them, then move off to join the others.

AMMAR
Jen!

Said helps him to his feet. Jen smiles in relief.

AMMAR (CONT'D)
I'm so glad you are okay.

BECKETT
For now, at least.

Beckett looks from the Contractors to Jen.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
You know there's no way Dyer's
letting any of us walk, right? As
soon as they get the ledger, we're
dead.

Jen nods, the wheels turning.

JEN
Yeah...

AMMAR
So what do we do?

BECKETT
I'm working on it.

Miller strides up.

MILLER
Alright, people, let's get moving.
Spin up the birds.

The Contractors move toward the helicopters. Harris and Green
herd Jen and the others toward Miller's Black Hawk. Jen
pauses a moment at the door...then climbs on board.

EXT. SAMSARA VALLEY - DAY

The Black Hawks come into view and swoop low, flying over the
battles-scarred RUINS OF A SMALL TOWN spread across most of
the valley floor.

Rotor wash kicks up a dust blizzard as the Black Hawks touch
down at the edge of town. Miller and his Contractors get out,
taking Jen and the others with them. Jen shouts at Said over
the noise.

JEN
Keep your head down!

Beckett helps Ammar take some of the weight off his injured
leg as they hustle into cover behind a low stone wall. Miller
speaks to the Pilots via earpiece.

MILLER
Alpha One, stay put. Alpha Two, you
stay airborne. Maintain a
perimeter.

BLACK HAWK PILOT (OVER RADIO)
Roger that.

The first Black Hawk powers down as the second takes off again, rising high above the valley floor.

Miller and the Contractors stand. He motions Kelly and Green forward, then points at Ammar.

MILLER

This one can't move -- I don't want him slowing us down. You sit tight with him here.

Kelly nods.

MILLER (CONT'D)

He tries anything, you give him one in the head.

Miller turns to the ruins before them.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Shall we?

The Contractor behind Jen nudges her in the back and she starts walking.

EXT. SAMSARA - RUINS - DAY

The group moves through what's left of the town. The Contractors advance tactically, weapons at the ready, but there's not a soul in sight.

MILLER

Civilians must be all gone, huh?

Said nods as they pass buildings reduced to piles of concrete and twisted rebar. Bullet holes are everywhere. The group heads toward the rugged hillside at the edge of the town.

EXT. SAMSARA HILLS - CAVE - DAY

Jen stands over a GAPING HOLE in the ground -- the mouth of a cave. Miller and Said join her at the edge.

MILLER

This is it, huh?

Said gulps a little at the depth. Miller cracks a few glow sticks and tosses them down. They're barely visible by the time they hit the cave floor. Beckett steps next to her, keeping his voice low.

BECKETT

Hey. Just keep your head down, get the story...

JEN

And don't get dead.

He winks.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Jen and Said rappel down into the darkness, clipped in to rope ascenders: battery-powered, boxy devices that lower them with soft mechanical WHINE as they squeeze a trigger.

Said white-knuckles the handgrip as he awkwardly uses his feet to push off the wall. A small stone ledge BREAKS OFF as Said's foot makes contact.

His foot swings free and he pitches forward in his harness, losing his balance. Said comes to a halt as his hands come off the ascender, releasing the trigger. Jen looks up from beneath him.

JEN

You good?

SAID

Yes.

(under his breath)

Why couldn't we just use a ladder?

He and Jen continue their descent. She switches on a high-powered flashlight and sweeps the beam through the cavern as it opens up around them.

Her flashlight beam illuminates a towering GATEWAY of blue-glazed bricks that seems to grow out of the living rock.

JEN

My god...

She and Said reach the bottom.

JEN (CONT'D)

We're down!

She unclips, then helps Said do the same.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

The others have joined them on the cave floor.

The Contractors flip on their weapon-mounted lights as they approach the gateway, casting pools of light over its bas-reliefs of floral patterns, animals, and deities.

The group passes through into a:

PROCESSIONAL WAY

Vast columns line the passageway deeper into the cavern.

The passageway ends in a sheer rock face flanked by two GIANT STATUES. They have human heads and torsos, but the lower bodies of scorpions.

Miller draws to a halt, then shines his light over the rock face in between the scorpion men. No way through. He turns to Jen expectantly.

MILLER

Dead end.

SAID

Wait...

He steps closer to the scorpion men, looking them over.

SAID (CONT'D)

The scorpion men -- in Sumerian myth, they guard the gates to the underworld. What we seek must lie beyond them.

BECKETT

If Allawi hid the ledger back here, he must have found a way through.

Miller motions to Harris, who steps forward and sets his pack on the ground. He opens it to reveal EXPLOSIVE CHARGES and a DETONATOR. Said stares in horror and steps forward.

SAID

No! You can't! ISIS would have already tried --

Miller pulls his pistol and aims it Said.

MILLER

You just keep telling me what I can and can't do, and we'll see how that goes for you.

Jen puts a hand on Said's shoulder.

JEN
Said, don't.

Reluctantly, he steps back. Miller holsters his weapon and motions Harris toward the wall. Said watches, brow furrowed...and then he remembers:

SAID
The key!

MILLER
What?

SAID
Allawi's key -- it must be for this.

Miller pulls out the key.

SAID (CONT'D)
Please...

Miller hands him the key, and Said approaches the wall. The others look on as he looks over the surface.

SAID (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Somewhere here...

And then he sees: a small INDENT in the stone. It's a square, too precise to have occurred naturally.

Said lines up the flat end of the key with the indent -- and it matches perfectly. He gives the key a tentative push...and the stone gives way, swallowing the key up to the carved end.

Nothing happens.

And then -- unseen gears and counterweights CLANK into motion. Dust falls from the wall between the scorpion men. An almost imperceptibly small vertical seam in the middle of the stone appears.

The group takes a collective step back, staring up in awe as the rock face slowly SPLITS OPEN and SLIDES APART. On the other side of the opening is a:

CHAMBER

STATUES of Mesopotamian deities surround a raised PLINTH topped by an altar-like stone slab in the center of the room.

Miller steps in, followed by Jen, Said, and the other Contractors. Beckett hangs back next to Harris, who puts his pack back on as they enter.

JEN

Said, look. The stone --

He follows her gaze to the plinth. The slab on top of it is slightly off in its alignment.

SAID

Someone moved it.

Miller nods at two of the Contractors. They step forward and, straining with effort, slide the stone to the side. There's a small hollow beneath the stone -- and a leather-bound NOTEBOOK rests inside.

SAID (CONT'D)

Is that...?

Miller picks up the book and opens it. He flips through the pages -- full of detailed handwritten notes, sketches of artifacts, maps, and printed files.

MILLER

The ledger.

He turns to Jen and Said.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Much obliged. 'Course, I'm afraid that means you just stopped being useful.

Miller reaches for his pistol --

And Beckett PUNCHES Harris across the jaw, then SMASHES a boot into his knee --

Harris CRIES OUT in pain and staggers, dropping his assault rifle -- Beckett spins behind him and gets an arm around his throat in a chokehold, holding him as a shield.

The Contractors snap up their weapons. Miller whips out his pistol and trains it on Jen.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Game's up, Beckett.

The Contractors tense, preparing to fire as Beckett's free hand appears over Harris shoulder, holding something.

Miller's eyes go wide as he realizes: it's the detonator.
Beckett flicks the activation switch, arming it.

MILLER (CONT'D)
Hold fire!

BECKETT
Weapons on the deck.

Nobody moves.

MILLER
You're bluffing.

BECKETT
Wouldn't count on it.

Beckett gets his thumb through the loop of the detonator's pin and starts to pull it out, his pointer finger hovering over the trigger.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Now! Or I'll bring this whole place
down.

Miller holds Beckett's stare...then sets his pistol on the ground and motions the Contractors to lay their weapons down.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Alright, Jen -- you and Said get
behind me.

Said starts to move. Jen remains in place, looking at Miller.

JEN
Give me the book.

BECKETT
Jen, what are you --

JEN
Do it.

Miller glowers at Jen, then takes a step toward her --

BECKETT
Ah-ah-ah. Throw it.

Miller reluctantly tosses the book to her. Moving slowly, she follows Said across the room back toward Beckett.

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Said, get his gun.

Said pauses and looks down Harris' assault rifle on the chamber floor. He hesitantly retrieves the rifle.

Jen and Said move into the doorway behind Beckett. He begins backing up after them, dragging Harris with him. They're almost out and then --

In a flash, Miller drops to his knees -- he claws his pistol off the ground and SHOOTs Harris.

Beckett stumbles, struggling to support the body as the remaining Contractors seize their weapons and OPEN FIRE.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Go!

He pulls the pack off Harris, then drops body and sprints after Jen and Said -- bullets SMASH into the stone around them as they emerge back into the --

PROCESSIONAL WAY

Beckett grabs the rifle from Said and SHOOTs back into the chamber, dropping one of the Contractors.

He FIRES off another few rounds to keep their heads down, then rushes down the passageway after Jen and Said.

MAIN CAVERN

Jen, Beckett, and Said race toward the climbing ropes. Beckett and Said get on one ascender, and Jen grabs hold of the other.

BECKETT

Hang on!

He squeezes the device's trigger, and it PULLS them up. Jen starts hers. The mouth of the cave grows bigger as it rushes to meet them --

EXT. CAVE - DAY

Beckett hauls himself over the lip of the cave, then offers a hand to Said and helps pull him up.

Jen appears after them. Indistinct SHOUTS and the sound of booted feet moving at a run follow her from below.

EXT. SAMSARA - STREETS - DAY

Jen and the others race through the ruins. Beckett pulls a sat phone from Harris' pack.

BECKETT

Jen!

He tosses her the phone.

JEN

On it!

She dials as they run.

JEN (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Sarra? We're at the ruins in
Samsara -- we need a ride out ASAP!
Send whatever you can --

Suddenly, a HAIL OF GUNFIRE strafes them. Jen drops the phone as she jags onto a side street behind Beckett -- bullets kicking up dust and debris chunks from the ground behind them -- one HITS the phone.

BECKETT

Did you get through?

JEN

I don't know.

BECKETT

Goddammit -- move!

They keep running down the street, then turn a corner --

SAID

It's a dead end!

Something catches Beckett's eye: a DOORWAY.

BECKETT

Go for the door!

Jen runs for the door with Said. She SLAMS into the door with her shoulder, KNOCKING it open -- she and Said tumble through to the ground.

Beckett leans back around the corner -- he can make out the Contractors running through the ruins in their direction. Beckett FIRES, hitting another, then runs after Jen and Said.

INT. SAMSARA - RUINED HOUSE - DAY

They race through the tight-knit corridors of the house as GUNFIRE SMACKS into the walls around them. Jen bursts through another doorway, emerging into a:

COURTYARD

There's mostly-intact STAIRWAY on the opposite side.

BECKETT

Stairs!

She takes off at a run with Said. Beckett FIRES another few shots into the house behind them.

Something comes flying through the door -- a GRENADE! Beckett scoops it up and tosses it behind him as he speeds up the stairs --

EXT. SAMSARA - ROOFTOPS - DAY

Jen emerges with Said, staying low. Beckett appears after them at the top of the stairs, chased by more GUNFIRE --

BECKETT

Grenade!

The grenade EXPLODES -- FLAMES ROAR UP as high as the roof as Jen, Beckett, and Said throw themselves down, showered by dust and pulverized chunks of masonry.

Staying low, Jen crawls forward to the raised edge of the roof. She rises, risking a glance over --

IN THE STREET

Miller and more Contractors FIRE AT HER from below.

ON THE ROOF

Jen ducks back down as bullets IMPACT along the lip of the roof. Beckett blind-fires over the edge, emptying the clip. He reloads and FIRES again, hitting one of the Contractors.

JEN

We have to move!

BECKETT

Alright -- stay low!

They start to crawl across the rooftop as GUNFIRE continues to pound the building around them.

Suddenly, the THRUM of a helicopter cuts through the air. Said turns to see the airborne Black Hawk coming into view behind them.

SAID

Jen -- the helicopter!

Jen and Beckett turn to see it.

THE BLACK HAWK

The right-hand Door Gunner swings his mounted minigun to bear while the Pilot turns to give him a clear shot --

The Gunner OPENS FIRE. A three-foot tongue of fire leaps from the barrel as it SCREAMS to life with a mechanical WHIR, rotating with blinding speed.

ON THE ROOF

Jen, Beckett, and Said break into a dead sprint as bullets lacerate the rooftop behind them --

Jen races toward the edge of the roof and JUMPS to the:

NEXT ROOFTOP

Said and Beckett follow close behind -- the trail of GUNFIRE has almost reached them --

But then it cuts off as the Black Hawk ROARS overhead. It starts to bank, coming around.

JEN

They're gonna make another pass.

BECKETT

Just keep going!

Up ahead, Jen can make out the last BUILDING on the block, shorter than the one they're on.

She gets ready to jump -- but then pulls up short as she realizes: the next building's roof is almost completely gone. Only a small portion remains.

Jen fights for balance, almost pitching over. Said tugs her back from the edge. Beckett glances back --

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Chopper's coming around!

JEN
We have to go one at a time --
Said, you first!

Said clocks the distance and steels himself, then gets a running start. He JUMPS -- and LANDS HARD on the:

LOWER BUILDING

Said almost goes off the remaining sliver of roof, but he catches himself. He moves to clear room for the others.

UPPER BUILDING

Jen looks back at the Black Hawk, bearing down on them again. A pair of HELLFIRE MISSILES streak from their mounts under the stub wings.

BECKETT
Get down!

He and Jen throw themselves flat. A split-second later -- the missiles SLAM INTO THE BUILDING. The EXPLOSION shakes the structure and blows out its remaining windows with a ROAR.

The building quakes beneath them, rocked by the missile blast. Beckett throws out his arms for balance. For a moment, it seems to settle...

And then the walls give, breaking apart in massive chunks as the entire building STARTS TO COLLAPSE. The roof TILTS, throwing Jen and Beckett onto their backs. They SLIDE down the roof, scrabbling for purchase --

As the walls come apart beneath it, the rooftop pitches toward the lower building. Jen and Beckett speed toward the edge, nothing to stop their motion --

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Jump!

They push off the edge of the roof, LEAPING CLEAR as they come level with a row of windows on the --

LOWER BUILDING

Jen and Beckett CRASH through the windows, landing in a tangle of shattered glass and splintered wood. Behind them, the building they were on collapses entirely.

Jen and Beckett share a breathless smile, twitchy from adrenaline -- that was too close.

EXT. SAMSARA - STREET - DAY

Jen, Beckett, and Said emerge from the ground floor of the building at a run. They head across the street, angling for the cover of the next block.

Behind them, Miller appears around rubble pile of the collapsed building.

He raises his assault rifle as Jen and Said disappear behind the skeleton of a WAREHOUSE, Beckett following close behind -- and FIRES. The shot HITS Beckett in the leg.

He stumbles from the force of the impact and turns to see Miller FIRE again -- this one takes him in the chest. A third shot SLAMS into his stomach.

JEN

No!

She and Said pull Beckett back out of sight behind the wall. They each get one of his arms over their shoulders and half-carry, half-drag him into the warehouse.

INT. SAMSARA - WAREHOUSE - DAY

Beckett grunts in pain and staggers, threatening to pull Jen and Said down with him. His rifle clatters from his hand and the pack drops off his back.

JEN

Set him down!

They lower Beckett to the ground, propping his back against the wall. Jen's hands are slick with blood as they come away. She exchanges a glance with Said -- it's not good.

BECKETT

You have...to go...

JEN

I'm getting you out of here.

BECKETT

No. It's...too late...

She tries to pull him to his feet, but he screams through gritted teeth.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

NO!

Jen realizes it's no use. She lets Beckett sink back down and kneels next to him. Despite his breath coming in labored gasps, he manages a chuckle.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

You never...did...know when to quit...did you?

Tears well in her eyes. A BURST of GUNFIRE hits the wall above them, but she doesn't seem to register it.

Through a hole in the wall, Said can make out the Contractors advancing down the street toward the building.

SAID

We must go!

Jen swallows, hesitating as she looks at Beckett.

BECKETT

Get out of here.

He stretches out, straining to reach Harris' fallen pack. Jen locks eyes with him in silent understanding, then slides it into his hands.

Beckett picks up his fallen assault rifle and FIRES OFF A BURST, sending the Contractors ducking for cover and momentarily stalling their advance.

SAID

Jen, please!

BECKETT

Go. Out the back.

He smiles weakly.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

It's okay.

Jen swallows, then stands. Her gaze doesn't leave Beckett for a long moment as Said pulls on her arm -- but then she turns and follows him away.

Beckett FIRES off another burst. Then the assault rifle CLICKS empty and he tosses it aside.

IN THE STREET

Miller and the Contractors advance on the warehouse. Using hand signals, Miller directs several to split off and circle the building. They close in with predatory efficiency...

IN THE WAREHOUSE

The NOISE of the Black Hawk grows louder, and Beckett looks up through the missing roof to see the helicopter bearing down on the building. He reaches into Harris' pack and pulls out the detonator.

Beckett's hands shake, but he manages to flick its activation switch. He raises the detonator to his mouth and tugs the pin out with his teeth, then spits it out.

His breathing grows calmer. Almost peaceful. Beckett closes his eyes...and squeezes the trigger.

A TREMENDOUS BLAST INSTANTLY TEARS THROUGH THE WAREHOUSE.

The Black Hawk tries to bank away, but it's too close -- the blast hits it directly. Alarms WAIL frantically as the chopper spins crazily, spiralling down --

It IMPACTS on the warehouse below as its fuel cells and ammunition stores DETONATE --

IN THE STREET

Miller ducks behind a sliver of wall. He ROARS in pain as the flames catch the side of his face --

The full force of the blast hits the other Contractors, flattening them in an instant --

BEHIND THE WAREHOUSE

Jen and Said sprint at full speed, just outpacing the flames. The detonation's power THROWS Said to the ground.

A hurricane of dust and smoke thrown up by the explosion fills the air as the echoes of the blast gradually fade.

Said's eyes flicker open.

He gets to his feet, coughing shielding his eyes as he stumbles unsteadily through the smoke. Said stumbles unsteadily back through the ruins.

SAID

Jen?

A SHAPE moves, coming toward him. Said pales with dread as he realizes: it's Miller. Livid burns cover nearly half his face and one eye has been seared shut, but he's very much alive.

Said turns to run. Miller raises his assault rifle and FIRES just as Said TRIPS over the body of a fallen Contractor and his rifle.

Miller's shot HITS Said in the arm instead of the head and he falls to the ground, crying out in pain.

Said scrambles backwards away from Miller, but stops short as he hits building wall.

MILLER

End of the road.

Miller takes aim again, but his rifle clicks empty. He tosses it aside and draws his pistol --

Right as Jen BARRELS INTO HIM! The pistol GOES FLYING.

Recovering quickly, Miller SLAMS a fist into her gut and she stumbles backwards. Miller advances on her. Said rushes in between them with a wild haymaker --

But Miller deflects the blow easily. He PUNCHES Said in the wounded arm, dropping him to the ground in a daze next to the dead Contractor he tripped over.

Miller turns back to Jen. Seizing her by the throat, he lifts her up and SLAMS her back into a section of the building's remaining wall with bone-jarring force.

Miller leans in close, enjoying it as he watches her struggle to pry his hands away from the throat. She swings a knee into his groin -- he GRUNTS in pain and topples, hitting the ground on his back.

He rolls over to get up -- and finds himself STARING INTO THE GAPING MUZZLE OF HIS PISTOL.

Jen holds it on him. Rage courses through her but she keeps the gun steady with deadly coldness in her eyes.

Miller stares up, defenseless as her finger brushes the trigger. She almost pulls it...

But then looks at the gun as if seeing it for the first time. Realizing how close she is to the edge. She lowers her trembling arm as the fury drains from her eyes and tosses the gun away.

Miller's hand moves toward his calf -- his fingers close on the hilt of the COMBAT KNIFE sheathed there.

Jen sees -- starts to move, but Miller's too close -- he slides the knife free and draws back his arm to strike when --

A SHOT rings out.

Jen flinches...but then realizes she isn't hit.

Miller's knife drops from his hand. He sinks to his knees, then topples over...revealing Said, holding the dead Contractor's smoking rifle.

Jen takes in what happened. She meets Said's eye and nods soberly. He nods back and stands.

KELLY (O.S.)

Drop it!

Jen and Said turn to see Kelly and Green advancing on them as the smoke clears, rifles raised.

GREEN

Hands! Show me your hands!

Slowly, Said drops his rifle and raises his hands. He takes a step forward.

KELLY

Stay where you are!

SAID

This is not your land -- you do not decide what happens here. And there is nothing here that belongs to you.

Said takes another step forward. There's no fear in his eyes any more, just resolve. Jen steps forward to stand next to Said. They face the Contractors together, unflinching.

And then...Kelly lowers her rifle. So does Green. Confused, Jen realizes the Contractors are looking at something behind them. She turns to see...

SIX IRAQI ARMY Mi-17 HELICOPTERS headed their way.

IN THE LEAD HELICOPTER

Captain Sarraf smiles as he spots Jen below.

ON THE GROUND

Relief washes through Jen and Said. as the helicopters bank toward them, silhouetted against the setting sun.

EXT. ALLAWI HOUSE - DAY

Rabia sweeps the path through the small garden. She turns to see Jen standing at the gate. Rabia watches her uncertainly through the bars.

INT. ALLAWI HOUSE - DAY

Jen sits opposite Tala and Rabia.

JEN

[I am sorry for what happened to Massoud. It may not mean much, but I hoped I could at least give you this.]

She takes an envelop from her bag and holds it out.

JEN (CONT'D)

[He would have wanted you to have it.]

Rabia accepts it hesitantly and opens it, then lifts out Allawi's family picture. Tears fill Tala's eyes as Rabia hands it to her.

TALA

[Thank you.]

JEN

[I hope knowing that his thoughts were always with you can help you find peace.]

Moved, Rabia nods. Jen stands.

RABIA

What will you do now?

JEN

Finish it.

Jen picks up her bag and heads for the door.

SOMEWHERE DARK

A crack of light splits the darkness. It widens, illuminating the insides of a SHIPPING CONTAINER. TURKISH POLICE OFFICERS pry open the doors with crowbars.

They're in:

INT. MERSIN FREE ZONE - WAREHOUSE - DAY

Vast towers of shipping containers rise around them. Jen stands behind the Officers with snapping pictures. Said is with her, arm in a sling.

TITLE OVER: Mersin, Turkey

The Police step inside the shipping container, flashlights casting beams over stacks of crates. An Officer opens one. It's FULL OF ARTIFACTS: statues, stone tablets, and more.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO POST - NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Well after midnight, the deserted floor seems almost peaceful. Jen sits in her corner cubicle, typing steadily on her laptop, zeroed in.

Visible as she writes: *"...killing of San Francisco Post reporter William Barnes...contractors targeted shipments of artifacts...recovered in Mersin, Turkey..."*

INT. NATIONAL MUSEUM - LAB - DAY

MUSEUM WORKERS unpack the crates, unloading more artifacts. Others are hard at work cataloging and cleaning the pieces. Said moves among the Workers, directing their efforts. Jen takes more pictures.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Ammar, moving stiffly, practices walking with a crutch. Alia helps him down the hallway as Jen and Said watch.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO POST - NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Chandra emerges from her office, pulling her coat on. She catches sight of Jen, the only other person left on the floor, and smiles to herself.

Jen keeps writing: *"...announced her resignation as allegations of misconduct continue to mount..."*

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - THESEUS GROUP OFFICES - DAY

A crowd of REPORTERS mob Dyer as she heads to her waiting car and Driver. She pushes past them, but pauses as she catches sight of Jen watching from across the street.

Dyer looks away, her face a mask of bitter resignation, and gets into her car.

INT. IRAQI NATIONAL MUSEUM - DAY

A large CROWD fills the gallery, taking in an exhibit displaying the recovered antiquities.

Nasim darts from station to station, her eyes wide with wonder at the site of bejewelled daggers, beautifully carved stone sculptures, and golden diadems. Watching her, Alia and Said share a smile.

Nearby, Jen raises her camera...but then thinks better of it, letting them have the moment to themselves.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO POST - NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Jen scrolls through her article, which now includes her pictures -- the recovered artifacts, al-Uman...and Beckett. She pauses for a long moment on his image, taking it in with a deep sadness in her eyes.

Then she types the article's byline: "By William Barnes and Jenna Lasky." All finished, she closes her laptop.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO POST - NIGHT

Jen steps out and pauses, letting the cool night air and muted sounds of the city wash over her. She fishes out her cigarettes and pulls one out.

She starts to light it...but then tosses it into a trash can along with the rest of the pack.

EXT. FLORES - DAY

A PIPER CUB flies over a colorful town on the edge of Lake Petén Itzá.

TITLE OVER: Flores, Guatemala

EXT. FLORES AIRSTRIP - DAY

Jen strides toward a waiting open-top 4x4 as WORKERS unload the Piper Cub behind her. A LOCAL DRIVER waves in greeting.

EXT. JUNGLE ROAD - DAY

The 4x4 drives deeper into the jungle down a muddy road. In the distance, the tips of MAYAN STEP-PYRAMIDS are visible just above the trees.

In the passenger seat, Jen checks a compass. As she leans forward to put it back in the bag at her feet, something slips through a gap in her shirt's buttons:

Her RING, now worn on a leather cord around her neck. Jen touches it, eyes distant for a moment. Then she tucks it back and smiles as she looks up at the road ahead.

THE END